

BYRON'S
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE
FOURTH CANTO

EDITED BY

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION.

1.

Life of Byron.

The impression which Byron made on his contemporaries, and even upon posterity, was not so much the result of his literary genius as of his astonishing personality. With but slight exaggeration it may be said that whereas in the case of other great poets we read the life because we are interested in the works, in his case we read the works because of the intense interest aroused by the man. He is the Napoleon of English literature; his influence was felt even more strongly outside of his native country than within it—a clear proof that his reputation did not depend on mere style; and he was essentially the man of action, made by circumstances a man of letters, whose writings owe their immortality to the *active* principle within them. A life of Byron, then, is not merely, as in the case of Tennyson or Shelley, a matter of interest or pleasure; it is the first essential; and the study of his works is only secondary. No poem that he ever wrote is equal in dramatic force to the tragedy of his life. His works have the sort of fascination that would cling to a despatch of Hannibal, could such a relic be discovered; but, no more than such a despatch, would they reveal in its entirety the character and genius of the man.

George Gordon, sixth Lord Byron, was born in London on January 22, 1788. He came of an ancient, noble, and turbulent house. One of his ancestors was famous in the Great Civil War ; another was distinguished, in the middle of the eighteenth century, as a desperate duellist ; his grandfather was the hero of those exciting adventures in the 'Wager' which form the most enthralling page in the story of Commodore Anson's voyage round the world. His father was a rake and a spendthrift, who succeeded in entrapping the affections of Catherine Gordon, an Aberdeen heiress, of weak and flighty disposition, and overweening pride in her Stuart descent. There was thus, if theories of heredity are to be trusted, every reason to anticipate a wild and extravagant career for the young heir of all these eccentricities. Such chance as he might have had was ruined by his education ; for his mother, to whose sole charge he was left by his father's death in 1791, was the most wayward and foolish of instructors. At one moment she capriciously petted the boy ; at the next she equally capriciously abused him. To add to all this, Nature had given him an extraordinary personal beauty, a keen sensitiveness to ridicule, and a deformed foot which was the cause of the acutest misery to him throughout his life ; nor was his precocious susceptibility to female charms likely to increase his happiness. His physical ailment was aggravated by quack doctors ; and his mental deformities were equally increased by a bad upbringing.

On the death of his uncle in 1798, George not only succeeded to the property, but fell under the guardianship of Lord Carlisle, a man of sense and

talent, who would be esteemed more highly if he had not essayed to be a poet. Carlisle endeavoured honestly to do his duty by his ward ; but his best efforts were thwarted by the ungovernable temper and intolerable perversity of Mrs. Byron. At length, in 1801, the boy was sent to Harrow, then under the management of Dr. Drury, one of the ablest of its many able Head Masters ; and here for the first time Byron came under wise and wholesome discipline. Drury saw at once that he was a boy to be led rather than driven ; he treated him with the utmost gentleness and consideration ; nor was his kindness thrown away. Long afterwards Byron spoke of him with reverence. ‘He was,’ he said, ‘the best, the kindest (and yet strict) friend I ever had ; whose counsel I have but followed when I have done well or wisely.’ Nevertheless, a public school was inevitably a place to fret his rebellious soul ; though he made some friendships here notably with Sir Robert Peel, and John Wingfield (*Ch. Har.*, I. 91), son of Lord Powerscourt, he was too desultory a student, too undisciplined, and too revolutionary to appreciate the dead-level monotony of his schoolmates ; and, while he loved Drury, he hated Harrow. Unfortunately, also, Drury resigned towards the end of Byron’s course ; the new Head Master, Dr. Butler, was unpopular ; and Byron was a conspicuous leader in disorder and impertinence. He narrowly escaped expulsion ; and, in October 1805, a year earlier than usual, he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. Here, though he was by no means what is technically known as a ‘reading man,’ he got through a good deal of miscellaneous

literature, and finally, in March 1808, contrived to take his degree. It was here also that he made the acquaintance of four friends, whose influence over him was very great. These were the brilliant and popular Charles Skinner Matthews, whose early death blighted the fairest promise, and of whose talents Byron more than once speaks enthusiastically ; Scrope Davies, to whom he dedicated 'Parisina' ; John Cam Hobhouse, afterwards a well-known writer and statesman, to whom is inscribed a canto of 'Childe Harold ;' and, less intimate, Francis Hodgson, afterwards a clergyman, who was the poet's discriminating admirer and charitable adviser in all his mental and external distresses. To Cambridge Byron rarely showed any gratitude ; but it is probable that he owed more than he was willing to allow.

During his undergraduate career, in March 1807, he published his first volume of poems, 'Hours of Idleness'—a collection of verses few of which rise above mediocrity, and none of which suggest the author's future greatness. They are, however, tainted by the affected misanthropy and the childish want of reticence which never left him. The volume was reviewed in the good old slashing style by Brougham in the 'Edinburgh Review.' Byron replied in the famous 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' a satire modelled upon his favourite Pope, in which, while there is as might be expected much crudity and ignorance, there is also a vigour and ease astonishing in a boy of twenty-one. This production was very successful ; the first edition was exhausted in a month ; and discern-

INTRODUCTION.

ing critics foresaw the rise of a new literary power. Shortly after launching this thunder-bolt, Byron set out with Hobhouse for the two years' travel which he has immortalised in 'Childe Harold.' On this journey he visited Lisbon (*Childe Harold*, I. 16), Cintra, the scene of the Convention on which he spends so much denunciation (I. 24), Seville, where he saw the Maid of ~~Siwagessa~~ (I. 54—58), Cadiz, and Gibraltar, a place which roused in his mind none of the ordinary feelings of Englishmen; for Byron, either really or from affectation, had little Imperial pride in his composition.

From Spain the travellers went on to Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, and Greece. The voyage was romantic enough in itself, but it was enlivened still more by a series of quarrels, love-affairs, and reconciliations the like of which was scarcely ever surpassed even in romance.' The truth, strange as it was, was commonplace compared with what was believed and told. No knight of King Arthur's Court ever did more extraordinary feats than were ascribed to Byron not only by the ignorant British public but by well-informed men. In particular, he was said to have taken possession of one of the 'Isles of Greece,' and to have roamed over the Turkish possessions in the spirit of a Paladin or Viking, capturing castles, rescuing maids, ransoming prisoners with princely munificence and falling into debt with equally princely *sang-froid*, or even, by way of variety, committing a murder to see how it felt! What is true is that he emulated the feat of Leander by swimming from Sestos to Abydos, and that several of the adventures.

which he actually had, exaggerated by memory and by imagination, formed the basis of some of his subsequent poems. Hobhouse left him in the middle of 1810 for England ; but Byron remained, restlessly wandering from place to place, till July of the following year. Two cantos of Childe Harold had been written during his travels. Within a month of his return his mother, to whom in spite of her vagaries he was tenderly attached, suddenly died ; and he suffered a scarcely less severe shock by the death of Charles Matthews in the same week. It was, however, about this time that Byron began really to feel the only pure and elevating emotion of his life, his affection for his half-sister Augusta, Mrs. Leigh, whom till now he had scarcely seen ; and about the same time, also, that he first made the acquaintance of Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, who subsequently became his biographer.

On his return to England, he placed in the hands of one of his friends, Mr. Dallas, his 'Hints from Horace,' one of the poetic results of his travels—a poor imitation of the paraphrases of that poet in which Pope had been so successful. 'Satire,' he said to Dallas, 'I believe to be my forte' ; and he fancied the 'Hints' would form a worthy pendant to the 'F., li l, Bards.' On reading this work, however, Dallas found no reason to agree with him : his disappointment was, as he tells us, grievous. Next morning he asked Byron if he had no other work to show him. 'Only a great many stanzas in Spenser's measure, relative to the countries I have visited. They are not worth troubling you with, but you shall have them all if you like.' Dallas soon saw

that these despised verses were of very different value from the Horatian performance ; and, in spite of Byron's depreciation, he proceeded to put them into the hands of Murray, the well-known publisher. Murray, after submitting them to Gifford, then one of the most formidable critics of the day, and editor of the *Quarterly Review*, accepted the risk of publication. Gifford, indeed, declared 'Childe Harold' to be not only Byron's best work, but equal to any of the age ; and Moore asserted that his only fear was that it might prove too good for its generation.!

The whole incident proves, what will be more fully noticed in a subsequent page, the extreme unreliability of Byron's critical sense, not only where his own poems were concerned, but in general. 'He was such an admirer of Pope and of the 'correct' school of poetry, that even when he had himself struck on a new and fruitful vein, and one moreover, in spite of Moore's fears, on an exact level with the taste of the age, he was unable to see what he had done,'

Byron's letters during the next five months are full of references to the printing of the book; the 'Hints from Horace' being fortunately suppressed ; nor in fact did the latter appear till after his death.

In February 1812, then, appeared the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold.' The success was instantaneous and immense, seven editions being disposed of in four weeks. 'I woke one morning,' said Byron, 'and found myself famous'; but the success was due less to the merits of the work, which were by no means high, than to the fact that the age was then in the humour for

description and romance, and to the rumours that were leaking out as to the poet's extraordinary adventures and personality. The lasting fame of 'Childe Harold' is due to the last two cantos.

During the next three years Byron was the spoilt darling of English society, the centre of fashion, the despair of women, and the deity of literature. In 1813 came out the *Giaour*, and the *Bride of Abydos*; in 1814 the *Corsair*, *Lara*, and the *Hebrew Melodies*; in 1816 the *Siege of Corinth*, and *Parisina*. All these poems were in precisely the same key, and they all had the same amazing success. Among the consequences of this extraordinary popularity was the decline in the vogue of the poetry of Sir Walter Scott, who, however, with the generosity and magnanimity which was part of his noble character, not only looked on Byron without jealousy, but became one of his closest friends.

In the midst of all this success, however, a calamity was impending. Byron, as we have seen, had been in love almost as often as Burns. His various passions—for Mrs. Spencer Smith (the 'Florence' of *Childe Harold*), for the 'Maid of Athens,' for 'Thyrza,' for Lady Caroline Lamb—which are commemorated in his poems, were only a few out of many affairs of the heart. He was, nevertheless, truly and deeply in love with Mary Chaworth, the heiress of a family whose estates adjoined his own at Newstead; but the feeling was not returned. As so often happens in such cases, he subsequently rushed into a marriage of pure convenience, in which there seems to have been no love on either side. The lady was

Miss Milbanke, a person of excessively correct character and manners, whose only motive for the marriage must have been the desire of reforming the famous and incorrigible poet. The wedding took place early in 1815 ; a child was born late in the year ; and within six weeks Lady Byron, for reasons never avowed, left her husband for ever. So far there is nothing extraordinary ; but the storm that instantly ensued is truly amazing. The public, which had hitherto idolised Byron, and had condoned only too lightly his known ~~immorality~~, now broke out into scurrilous abuse ; rumours were spread without the slightest foundation ; society, that had spoilt him, now unanimously abandoned him ; and in April 1816 he quitted England for ever. The conduct of Byron may or may not have been bad ; but that of the country is certainly inexcusable, and it helps to explain, if not to excuse, the wildness of his subsequent life and the tone of his succeeding poems. There is but too much reason to believe that Byron, feeling himself unjustly condemned, rushed recklessly into vices that deserved and received condemnation, not only from public opinion, but from his own conscience. But if he was the loser, posterity has been the gainer ; for from the day of his departure from England begins the development of his true poetic genius. Had he died in 1816 he would have been known merely as a promising youth ; the succeeding eight years have made him immortal.

It is no part of our business here to detail his restless and roving life during these years. In Switzerland he first came into contact with the

great, but then unrecognised, poet Shelley ; a connection which did him no good with the British public, for Shelley was the very incarnation of atheism, and his views of morality were not those of the ordinary Englishman. The stay in Switzerland gave the inspiration to the 'Prisoner of Chillon,' 'Manfred,' and the noble third canto of 'Childe Harold.' Thence he passed into Italy, where he stayed till the end of 1823, moving from place to place as the humour, or the decay of some love-affair, induced him. His wild behaviour, which often seemed scarcely consistent with sanity, made him universally known. He first settled in Venice. Here, as elsewhere, his literary activity, in spite of all his escapades, was prodigious. In 1818 appeared the last and greatest canto of 'Childe Harold,' by some placed highest among his works ; 'Manfred' was finished in the same year ; 'Beppo,' 'Mazeppa,' and the first cantos of 'Don Juan,' followed in quick succession. At Venice, also, he made the acquaintance of the Countess Guiccioli, whose name will ever be linked with his as that of Lady Hamilton with Nelson's. In 1820 we find him at Ravenna ; it was here that he produced two of his very greatest poems, 'Cain' and the 'Vision of Judgment.' 'Cain' is one of the most astonishing expressions in English of 'scepticism,' that is, of the spirit which evermore—not denies, but doubts. The 'Vision' is a merciless attack on Southey, who had after the death of George III. expatiated in an absurd series of hexameters on the virtues of a monarch whom Byron hated and despised beyond all others. At Pisa, in 1822, Byron witnessed the strange scene of the cremation of the body of

Shelley, who had been drowned at Spezzia a few days before. Here also he resumed 'Don Juan,' and carried it down to the end of the eleventh canto. The remaining five were finished at Genoa. 'Don Juan,' to all who are capable of appreciating its peculiar flavour, is and will remain by far Byron's greatest work : it bears to the *Iliad* something of the same relation as Balzac's 'Comédie Humaine' bears to the 'Divine Comedy' of Dante.

We have now arrived at the last scene of this strange eventful history. In April 1821 began the great Greek struggle for independence. From the very first it had attracted the enthusiastic interest of every Englishman in whom the love of freedom and the love of antiquity had any place ; but perhaps, of all Englishmen Shelley and Byron were the most intensely moved. To the cause of Greece, Shelley dedicated his noble dramatic poem 'Hellas ;' and scarcely ten consecutive pages of Byron but bear witness to the strength of his feeling. Shelley's early death prevented him from doing more ; but, in 1823, Byron determined not only to write for Greece but to act, and if necessary to die, for her. There was, it is true, something theatrical in this step ; there was something theatrical in every one of his actions ; but that his main motive was pure and noble there can be no doubt. He was under no illusions as to the character of the struggle ; he did not expect to find a Leonidas in every Greek captain ; his letters show plainly that Byron, if like Napoleon he was a dreamer of dreams, had also like Napoleon an intensely practical mind. He went with the presentiment of

death upon him. Setting sail on July 16, 1823, he was heard to say, 'where shall we be next year?' Precisely a year after, to a day, he was buried.

During the next few months he was engaged in all the tasks of statesmanship—composing quarrels, writing despatches, forming the motley Greek horde into an army capable of making head against the Turk, organising what had been won and preparing to conquer more—and in all these complicated tasks he showed himself a heaven-born statesman. His wayward and despotic spirit was tamed; he, who had always acted by caprice, now compromised, deliberated, and conciliated. He never spared himself; indeed, so careless was he of his health that early in February 1824 his associates begged him to take a rest. But he was determined to carry through his cherished design, an attack upon Lepanto. His exertions in this cause reduced his strength almost to vanishing point; and when, early in April, he caught a chill on one of his rides, he had no vitality left to throw off its effects. On the nineteenth of April, at Misso-longhi, with the words ' 'Tis time to sleep' upon his lips, that great and unquiet spirit passed away.

'Seek out—less often sought than found,
A soldier's grave, for thee the best,
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.'

The full story of his amazing life must be read in Moore's 'Life,' a work which, with some extraordinary defects, is yet a noble monument to his fame. His letters—and Byron's letters

reveal him more fully than 'Don Juan' itself—have been recently issued by Mr. Prothero.

II.

Byron's place in Literature.

It has already been indicated that the place of Byron in the literature of his country is due less to the intrinsic merits of his work—great as these are—than to the immense impression of his personality. Whatever he had undertaken to do would have been equally great; he might have been a statesman or a warrior, and it is in a sense accidental that the vast force of his mind was turned into a poetic channel. We have then to consider in his case an amateur of Titanic power rather than the cautious and accurate professional.

Hence it is that in Byron we miss two things which we find in such poets as Milton and Tennyson. We miss teaching, and we miss form. But all is compensated by what we find, and that is extraordinary and at times overwhelming force. Illustrations of these three points can be found on every page of his mature work. There is little to learn; there is much to find fault with in the poetic expression; but there is not a page that could have been written by any but a daring, original, and over-mastering personality.

'He taught us little,' says Matthew Arnold in the poem in which he compares Byron with the two greatest of his literary contemporaries, Wordsworth and Goethe; and the criticism is the same as that passed upon him by Carlyle; 'No genuine reproductive thought was ever re-

vealed by him to mankind.' This is only to say that, like Pitt and Peel and other great statesmen, he did not originate the ideas which it was his business to put into action—action, in his case, meaning forceful and compelling words. As Peel derived from others the ideas which he expressed in his Budgets and in his repeal of the Corn Laws, so Byron's poems are but the expression of ideas current in his time. Where he seems to be adding to that common stock, he is really borrowing from someone else. His 'sources' have been traced to all kinds of out-of-the-way corners ; but he was not ashamed also to borrow from the best-known writers ; for he was the most daring of pilferers. Nor, like Tennyson or even Pope, did he always improve what he stole. He robbed even himself ; his poems are full of descriptive touches and phrases that, as a glance at his biography shows, had been previously used by him either in conversation or in his letters.

As to his want of form, no one with the least appreciation of what form is can fail for a moment to perceive his extraordinary carelessness. He is far indeed from the elaborate and harmonious accuracy of Milton or from the delicate and melodious precision of Tennyson. He rather, to compare lesser things with greater, recalls the royal indifference of Shakespeare. He gives us his first expression of a thought : 'I never,' he says himself, 'recast anything. I am like the tiger; if I miss the first spring I go grumbling back to my jungle.' As a result, we are constantly, in the midst of the most glowing descriptions, shocked by an ineptitude or a

bathos ; by a line foisted in for the sake of the rhyme, or by a lofty thought ignobly expressed. His works are full of the sort of bad line which Virgil called ‘props,’ to keep the bridge from falling till the right stones could be found ; but he did not, like Virgil, come back to find the right words. Take for example, from the otherwise noble lines on the ‘Isles of Greece :’

‘ Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
 They have a king who buys and sells ;
 In native swords and native ranks
 The only hope of courage dwells :
 But Turkish force and Latin fraud
 Would break your shield, *however broad.*’

Not only is the whole verse below the level of the rest of the poem, but the detestable and meaningless last words are a mere botch, only to be pardoned in the first manuscript copy. But Byron’s first copy was also his last. He could cut out—as he did the feeble verses which, in the 84th stanza of ‘Childe Harold’ occupied the place now held by ‘To Inez ;’ but he could not polish.

Take one more example—many indeed occurring in the first canto of ‘Childe Harold,’ and attention being drawn to them in the notes—from the ‘Deformed Transformed’—

‘ Beautiful shadow
 Of Thetis’s boy.
 Who sleeps in the meadow
 Whose grass grows o’er Troy :
 From the red earth, like Adam,
 Thy likeness I shape,
 As the being who made him,
 Whose actions I ape.’

Here the first verse is lumbering enough, with its profusion of sibilants, and its clumsy second relative, to say nothing of its heaviness of sound ; but the second is beyond words detestable.

It is on this account, among others, that ' *Don Juan* ' surpasses his other works. In a poem in which formal finish—at least of a certain kind—is not required, and in which ease is of more importance than grace, nay, in which bathos is itself pressed into the service of art, these defects do not shock us. It is on this account also that Byron has been far more highly appreciated by good judges abroad than by the fastidious at home. Goethe, for example, whose own works are distinguished by exquisite grace and finish, naturally failed to see the lack of these qualities in a poet with whose language he was only partially familiar ; and hence, admiring, as he must admire, the great powers of Byron, he has, in the second part of ' *Faust*,' paid to him under the name of Euphorion the noblest tribute ever paid by one great poet to another since Dante's apotheosis of Virgil. Contrast with this the opinion of Swinburne, in whom the worship of form is almost an idolatry, and who therefore, constantly irritated as he is by Byron's innumerable lapses, allows him a place far below what is due to his real merits.

And those merits are very great. They may all perhaps, as we have indicated, be summed up in the one word ' force.' Byron's was a strong and masterful nature, feeling intensely if superficially, and powerfully if transiently. It was ' power ' which struck Sir Walter Scott in the first two cantos of ' *Childe Harold* ;' and it is

power that strikes us to-day. Hence the 'eager abundance of diction, arguing full confidence in inexhaustible resources,' which Scott also observed in those cantos. Hence also the splendour and external accuracy of his descriptions, which form perhaps his chief title to fame. 'Description,' he himself tells us in 'Don Juan,' (V. 52) 'is my forte ;' and even in the first canto of 'Childe Harold' there is enough description to show that he was right. In the later cantos, and in 'Don Juan,' this power is seen at its height; but it must be observed what kind of description it is. Here is none of that exacting compulsion which made Wordsworth, to whom Nature was a deity not to be profaned, take care that not a lichen on the thorn should be missed ; none of that loving minuteness which makes Tennyson the best of naturalists. Byron's is an amazing skill in describing the *first* impression made by a mountain or a statue upon a passionate observer. Take as by no means the best example, the description of the matador in the seventy-fourth stanza of Canto I. Never was the external aspect of a bull-fight more vigorously described ; the lines live with the fury of the contest. But there is nothing deeper.

Byron is thus, as might be expected, almost pre-eminent as a describer of *action*. For breathlessness of movement, for words that seem almost to *be* the deeds they describe, he has no equal in English literature. Even Scott, whose Battle of Flodden is justly regarded as a masterpiece, has less of the peculiar power of expressing Titanic struggle in a few decisive words than Byron ; less in fact of the divine ethereal frenzy.

The hackneyed passage in the third canto of 'Childe Harold' on Waterloo, which seems as if it had been written at a white heat, is full of this Homeric madness, which is such that, at the twentieth recitation, the hearer is carried out of himself and fancies himself one of the combatants in that grisly strife.

This same rushing force, while it dominated contemporaries and even at times dominates us, was the secret not only of Byron's power but of his weakness. He *was* himself, and he *felt* himself; he had no capacity to become another. When he imagined a Cain or a Manfred, he was really not imagining *them*, but Byron in their place. Hence his total failure as a dramatist. His dramas are indeed unjustly despised. They contain, even the worst of them, magnificent passages of declamation; and, at the very least, they are poetry. In 'Manfred' and 'Cain,' indeed, where the dramatic setting is of little moment, we have some of the finest poetry in the English language. But dramas they are not; they are monologues. Nor are they monologues like Browning's, in which the actual Blougram or Sludge is speaking; they are Byron all over. What makes them worse than they might have been is that Byron, conforming to the convention, wrote them in blank verse—the easiest of all metres to write badly, and the hardest to write well. Hence, 'when the first spring fails,' there is not even a rhyme to conceal the failure.

Whatever, then Byron wrote, he wrote *about* himself, or rather he wrote *himself*. All his varying moods are to be found in his poems, naked and

unashamed ; and his ~~humour~~ changed more rapidly and capriciously than any other man's. But, speaking generally, we may say that his mood was one of revolt—revolt against the time, against the religion of the time, against the politics of the time, and against himself as involuntarily but inevitably a child of the time. So far as his theatrical nature was capable of absolute sincerity, this was his sincere feeling, however grotesque were the forms in which it was expressed. Hence arises the enormous power with which he gives a voice to human misery, for the misery was his own. Never was there such a master in the art of dressing love in words. 'From maniac laughter to piercing lamentation,' as Macaulay says, he knew every note. Hence arises also the prodigious force of his sarcasm, which next to the note of grief, was the note he preferred to employ. The 'Vision of Judgment,' which must not be compared with the grave political satires of Dryden, is the most crushing and triumphant personal satire in the language. Hence arises also the strength of the impression produced by such a poem as 'Cain.' Considered as a theological argument it is worthless: a few lines of Dryden's 'Religio Laici' outweigh it all; but as an expression of the wild ravings of a human heart caught in the tangles of a creed in which it half believes while struggling to disbelieve with courage, 'Cain' has never been surpassed. The greatness of Byron, then, consists in this, that he has with unexampled power and frankness confessed to us all the feelings of his own mind, and that his mind, while powerful enough to express those feelings exactly, was yet so ordi-

nary and humane that the common man feels himself, and all his griefs and aspirations, his doubts, hopes, and fears, mirrored in the verse of Byron.

The mention of the word 'revolt' brings us to a subject, the understanding of which is necessary to the due appreciation of Byron's position. He was born in the year before the opening of the French Revolution, the greatest event in modern history ; his early years were passed in the stress of the great struggle of England first with the Revolution itself and secondly with Napoleon. Byron was never a consistent thinker in politics or ~~anything~~ else; but his sympathies led him to take the view so nobly championed by Fox, that in that struggle France was substantially in the right, and that the war ought to have been avoided. He went even farther than Fox. His letters prove what his poems suggest, that he even regretted the result of Waterloo, and that he believed Napoleon, on the whole, to represent the cause of freedom. He was thus in 'revolt' against the dominant feeling of his country. But side by side with the revolt represented by the French Revolution there was going on a literary separation from the past. The old, so-called 'correct' style of poetry, of which Pope was the greatest representative, had held the field for nearly a century ; but it was beginning gradually to yield to the new 'romantic' and natural style of which Wordsworth, Scott, and Coleridge were in their different ways the exponents. It is here again that we find Byron standing apart from the general stream. Here again as he said of him-

self, he was 'of the opposition.' He was a keen and enthusiastic supporter of the old fashion, and of those who, like Campbell, Crabbe, and Rogers, endeavoured to maintain it. Or rather, in his perverse spirit of rebellion, he revolted against the current taste as he revolted against everything else. Whenever he criticises, he criticises in the spirit of Dr. Johnson. Yet, in spite of all this, his own poetry is the very reflection of the spirit of his age, and was popular for that very reason. He could see, or professed to see, no merit in Spenser, and thought Tasso as great a poet as Milton; yet his own writings are the fullest refutation of his opinions. The result was a paradox similar to the paradox of his politics. The Jacobin who never forgot that he was a peer, the theoretical democrat whose actions were always dictated by aristocratic feeling, was also the poet of 'Childe Harold' who professed to think that the whole method of 'Childe Harold' was wrong. Along with his Spenserian cantos he wrote, in imitation of Pope, a series of 'Hints from Horace' which, he repeatedly designed to publish, and which, appearing after his death, turned out to be the worst of all his performances. This peculiar perversity, this determination to act and think in a manner different from what might be expected of him, was due to his love of surprise and of antithesis, and is similar to his love, in his daily life, of extravagant behaviour and of practical jokes. It accounts, also, for much of what would be otherwise inexplicable in his writing; for some of his bathos, and for an appreciable fraction of the worst faults of his

dramas and poems. But even when revolting against the politics or literary taste of his age, Byron was *of* his age. The very reaction, being equal and opposite to the action of the times, was conditioned by them. Alike in expressing his own age and in endeavouring to restore an earlier, Byron was really the child of the epoch in which he was born, and of no other.

The estimation in which Byron has been held has suffered even more than the usual vicissitudes. During his life-time and for some time after, he was exalted to a pedestal hardly below those of the *Di Majores*; and this not by the ignorant only. 'He has matched Milton on his own ground,' cried Scott when 'Cain' appeared; and Shelley said of the same poem that it was finer than anything since 'Paradise Lost.' The opinion of Goethe we have already discussed. Nor did the gradual growth in the appreciation of Wordsworth, which culminated about 1839, altogether destroy the illusion. By the year 1860, however, his fame had sunk to its lowest: the point of view of criticism had shifted. Those who desired profundity, originality, and 'a message,' preferred Wordsworth; those who loved the ethereal and intangible in poetry, exalted Shelley; those who asked for perfection of form and classic grace, affirmed the superiority of Tennyson or even Keats. But no one influence did so much to destroy the Byron mania as that of Carlyle. Carlyle, with his doctrine of 'silence,' was exasperated by Byron's want of reticence. 'Byron,' he says in 'Past and Present,' 'was unhappy, and seemed surprised at it.' One dislikes to see a poet reduced.

to proclaim on the streets such tidings ; the thing is like a meet-jack whirring round and shrieking "once I was happy, now I am *meeserable*." Carlyle's love of truth and sincerity, also, was antipathetic to Byron's affectations and theatrical airs. What 'lesson' does he teach us ? he cries. 'What *truth* did he reveal ?'

Hence, between 1860 and 1880, Byron was as unjustly despised as he had before been unduly exalted. Since then, perhaps, there has been a disposition to return to him. A more catholic spirit of criticism has arisen ; we are less disposed to rule out those who are wanting in some pet poetical feature, nor are we so inclined to draw up a class list of poets, placing this one or that one in his order of merit. We see quite clearly that Byron is not Shelley or Wordsworth, but we do not therefore deny him the merits he has. A definition of poetry which shall exclude him, we see, is a narrow one.

The last word about him is yet to be written, and will always remain to be written. Each generation will have its own standpoint, and will criticise great writers from that standpoint. But, to judge from the history of thousands of years, those writers have the quality of permanence who appeal to root-principles in human nature : and, while men go on sinning and repenting, while they do the evil that they hate, while they love blindly and kindly, while they laugh because they would not weep, while they wonder, doubt, and hope as to what happens after death and as to why things go awry in life, so long, it is safe to say, will 'Cain' and

‘Don Juan’ have their audience, and so long will Byron be remembered.

III.

Contemporary Events.

A few dates are here subjoined to indicate the historical and literary position of Byron.

- 1770. Birth of Wordsworth.
- 1771. Birth of Scott.
- 1772. Birth of Coleridge.
- 1788. Birth of Byron.
- 1789. Beginning of the Great Revolution.
- 1793. Beginning of the Great War, which lasted almost unbroken till 1815:
- 1795. Carlyle born.
- 1798. Wordsworth and Coleridge exemplify their new theory of poetry by the publication of ‘Lyrical Ballads.’
- 1807. ‘Hours of Idleness.’ Invasion of Portugal by Junot.
- 1808. The Peninsular War begins, and lasts with many vicissitudes till 1814.
- 1809. Wellington wins at Talavera ; Byron’s travels begin.
- 1811. Albuera. Byron returns.
- 1812. The Russian Campaign. The first two cantos of ‘Childe Harold’ published.
- 1814. The ‘Excursion’ of Wordsworth published.
- 1815. End of the great war at Waterloo.
- 1816. Byron leaves England.

1821. Death of Keats, aged 26.
 1822. Death of Shelley, aged 30.
 1824. Death of Byron, aged 36.
 1832. A long period of agitation is ended by the Reform Bill. Death of Scott.
 1834. Death of Coleridge. At this point the poetical period begun in 1798 may be said to close. Tennyson, inauguating a new period, begins his work in 1833, in which year Browning's first poem, 'Pauline,' also appears 'Sartor Resartus,' inaugurating a new era in prose, appeared in 1834.
 1843. Southey dies, aged 69.
 1850. Wordsworth dies, aged 80.

IV.

The Metre.

The metre chosen by Byron for 'Childe Harold' is the Spenserian, so called because it was first used by Spenser in his *Faerie Queene*, the early books of which appeared in 1590. The scheme of the stanza is based upon the 'ottava rima' of Ariosto and other Italian poets, which consisted of six heroic lines rhyming alternately, and a couplet concluding the same metre, in fact, as that employed so successfully by Byron himself in 'Don Juan' and other poems. We may express the system of rhymes in the 'ottava rima' thus: *ab, ab, ab, cc*. From this Spenser, perhaps noticing the entire change of effect obtained in Chaucer's 'Rhyme Royal' by the omission of the fifth line (or third *a*) which gave a sense of linked sweetness wanting in the com-

pact form of the original, determined to vary the order of the rhymes as follows : *ab, ab, bc, bc*. His sense of rhythm at once showed him that for the completeness of the stanza a ninth line was necessary, which further he made of six feet instead of five, and rhymed with the sixth and eighth. So successful was this experiment that this stanza at once assumed, and has since always retained, a recognised place among the established English metres.

The genius of Spenser inclined him on the whole to sweet and languorous poetry rather than to vigour and compression. Though it is only those who know little of the *Faerie Queene* who would deny that there is much Miltonic force, as well as much quiet or even boisterous humour in it, yet its prevailing character is unquestionably soft, diffuse, and mild. Hence this metre is often adopted by those who, like Thomson in his 'Castle of Indolence,' or Tennyson in his 'Lotos Eaters,' desire to express extreme luxuriance or extreme languor. But there were others who saw that the metre also admitted of strength and precision ; nay, that in variety and capacity it is hardly inferior to blank verse itself. Among these was Beattie, a poet once admired far beyond his deserts, and now perhaps unduly neglected, who in 1771 produced in this metre a work called 'The Minstrel.' In 'The Minstrel,' with varying success, he strove to turn the Spenserian stanza to every purpose that might seem required. Byron admired Beattie greatly; and in the preface to 'Childe Harold' he informs us that it was his authority that encouraged him to believe that the extreme multiplicity of subject

and style in ‘Childe Harold’ might be easily covered by this measure. ‘The stanza of Spenser,’ he says, ‘according to one of our most successful poets, admits of every variety. Dr. Beattie makes the following observation : “ Not long ago, I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and to be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me : for, if I mistake not, the measure which I have adopted admits equally of all these kinds of composition.” Strengthened in my opinion by such authority, I shall make no apology for attempts at similar variations in the following composition; satisfied that if they are unsuccessful, their failure must be in the execution rather than in the design.’

In the first two cantos, in order to give a tone of archaism reminding us of Spenser, Byron affects a few antiquated words and expressions—often it is true ignorantly used. In the later cantos he drops this affectation. His use of the metre, also, becomes freer and more easy as he becomes more familiar with it. In the first canto, for example, there is almost always a pause at the end of the third foot of the last line: a monotony he tries occasionally to vary in the later portions. Nor is there, generally, the same daring in the use of his measure as we find afterwards; none of the five inversions of accent, such as ‘ But hush, hark, a deep sound strikes like a rising knell,’ that show the master who knows his instrument. There is, in the first canto, far too much Pope-like regularity; a monotonous coincidence of the end of the line

with a pause in the sense, and altogether we see the marks of youth. But there is enough vigour, and enough also of metrical flow, to explain the enormous vogue of the poem, and to justify the more critical admiration of such men as Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Moore.

A word is perhaps desirable here on the changes which Byron made while the book was passing through the press. His preface, as we have seen, lays stress on the capacity of the Spenserian stanza to adapt itself to the light and even humorous style. But there is little in 'Childe Harold,' as it now appears, of this lightness and humour; the only really *burlesque* passage, perhaps, being the description of a London Sunday in stanzas 69 and 70. As originally written however, the canto contained far more. 'There were,' says Moore, 'several stanzas full of direct personality, and some that degenerated into a style still more familiar and ludicrous than that of the description of a London Sunday. The intrusion of comic scenes, however sanctioned by habit and authority, rarely fails to offend. The poet was himself convinced of the failure of the experiment, and in none of the succeeding cantos of 'Childe Harold' repeated it.'

He found, then, that the metre of Spenser was not really adapted for absolute burlesque, and in future attempts used rather the *ottava rima* of Ariosto and Pulci—a measure in which he was a wonderful master—for that purpose. He was drawn to it, doubtless, by his success in rendering the first canto of Pulci's 'Morgante Maggiore' into English verse; and in 'Don Juan' he

carried that measure to the utmost heights of Aristophanic humour. But the Spenserian he kept for energy and pathos.

As a specimen of the kind of verse thus cut out from 'Childe Harold' Moore gives the following lines on Sir John Carr, a well-known traveller of that day, whom he met in Seville:—

'Ye who would more of Spain and Spaniards know,
Sights, saints, antiques, arts, anecdotes, and war,
Go, hie ye hence to Paternoster Row,—
Are they not written in the books of Carr,
Green Erin's knight, and Europe's wandering star?
Then listen, readers, to the Man of Ink,
Hear what he did, and sought, and wrote afar;
All these are cooped within one quarto's brink;
This borrow, steal (don't buy), and tell us what you
think.'

This is very like one of the weaker stanzas of 'Don Juan.'

THE FOURTH CANTO.

In the Fourth Canto, Byron continues his descriptions of the places visited by him in his travels on the Continent, after his final departure from England in April 1816. After a short stay in Switzerland, he went on to Italy with his friend Hobhouse, and settled in Venice in November the same year. From Venice he set out on an expedition to Rome, visiting on his way, first Arqua, then Ferrara, and lastly Florence. During the six weeks that he remained at Rome, he saw all that was worth seeing, and visited on horseback some of the most famous sites in its neighbourhood, the Alban Mount, Jivoli, Frescati, the Falls of Terni and the Clitumnus. On his return to Venice, he set to work on this last Canto, which, in his dedication to Hobhouse, he describes as "the longest and the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions." It was completed in September 1817, and published early in 1818.

The Canto opens with a magnificent description of Venice,—Venice as she was when Byron saw her in the days of her fallen greatness, and Venice as she was in those far off times when in the plenitude of her power she held 'the glorious East in fee.' Then follow descriptions of the other places visited by him, interspersed with sketches dashed off with rapid strokes, of famous persons whose names are

associated with these places,—Dante, Tasso, Petrarch, Ariosto and Boccaccio. At Florence and at Rome, Byron saw the great master-pieces of Art preserved in their galleries and museums, and we have brilliant descriptions of the Venus d' Medici, the Dying Gladiator, the Laocoön, and the Apollo Belvedere, descriptions with which every reader of English poetry is familiar. After a few stanzas lamenting the death of the Princess Charlotte, over-wrought, perhaps, but still not wanting in genuine feeling, the poem concludes with a splendid address to the Ocean which Byron had loved from his youth, and which at the end of his journey he beheld from the Alban Mount.

The journey from Venice to Rome furnished an abundance of material suitable for poetic treatment, and Byron's powerful imagination and exuberant fancy enabled him to make excellent use of it. Imaginative descriptions of memorable places and scenes, of famous statues, and world-renowned buildings such as the Coliseum and the Pantheon and St. Peter's, highly interesting notices of some of the greatest men who have lived, historical allusions to important events of classic and mediæval times, the poet's own personal feelings poured out now in tones of indignation and now in tones of soft tenderness, all combine to give a peculiar charm to the poem and make it the finest, perhaps, of all Byron's productions. While the works of men's hands are described in glowing colours, there is admiration for nature also, as seen in the description of the Falls of Terni and of the sky at evening on the banks of the

Brenta, and in the concluding address to the Ocean. "The whole of this Canto," says Wilson, "is rich in description of Nature. The love of Nature now appears as a distinct passion in Lord Byron's mind. It is a love that does not rest in beholding, nor is satisfied with describing, what is before him. It has a power and being blending itself with the poet's very life. Though Lord Byron had, with his real eyes, perhaps, seen more of Nature than ever was before permitted to any great poet, yet he never before seemed to open his whole heart to her genial impulses. But in this he is changed: and in this Canto of Childe Harold, he will stand a comparison with the best descriptive poets, in this age of descriptive poetry."

The dazzling splendour of Byron's verses, however, cannot blind the critical reader to some very serious defects in them. His expressions are too often careless and slovenly, his constructions too often involved, and his meaning too often obscure from excessive condensation. In his prolific mind, images and ideas spring up in wild profusion, jostling one another in their efforts to find clear and distinct expression. His use of figurative language is immoderate, metaphors and similes being piled up so as to cause confusion. The rhymes are in some cases atrocious, while errors of grammar occur, that would be inexcusable in a schoolboy. Much of this imperfection is due, no doubt, to the haste and rapidity with which he wrote, to his impatient and impetuous nature that would submit to no restraints. Much of it is due also to the troublesome bond-

age of rhyme in which he was held by the form of verse he adopted for his poem, whatever else its merits may be. When we consider the length to which the poem runs and the enormous number of words required for purposes of rhyme, together with their grouping and arrangement, we shall not be surprised if the poet has not always expressed his thoughts as clearly as he might have, if he had not been hampered by the metrical constraints of the Spenserian stanza. The exigencies of rhyme must be held responsible in many cases for the feeble thought and feeble line.

In the Fourth Canto, Byron speaks in his own person, dropping all disguise. The Pilgrim does make his appearance, but it is only at the end of the Canto, and for no other purpose than to bid farewell to the reader. Whatever uncertainty may have been felt in regard to the identity of the poet with Childe Harold in the earlier Cantos, there is no such uncertainty now. We have in this Canto, Byron's own feelings, thoughts and sentiments expressed without reserve. We may disapprove of his exaggerated sentiments and his too frequent rhetorical expression of them: we may not always agree with him in his criticisms on Art and Literature, and in his opinions of men and their doings: we may grow weary of the iteration and reiteration of his wrongs and sufferings, so unmanly and un-English; but after making all deductions, we may still admire the undoubted merits of the poem, and recognise it as one of the greatest English poems of the Nineteenth Century. It may reveal much that was

bad in Byron, but it reveals also much that was good,—his spirit of independence, his love of freedom, his hatred of oppression, his scorn for all things base and mean, his generous sympathy with fallen greatness,—and these are virtues which go far to cover a multitude of sins.

DEDICATION

1818.

TO JOHN HOBHOUSE. ESQ., A.M., F.R.S., ETC.

VENICE, *January 2, 1818.*

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,

After an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos of Childe Harold, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better,—to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than thou art not ungrateful—I can, or could I, but hold Harold, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet—to one whom I have known long and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril,—to a friend often tried and never found wanting ;—to yourself.

In so doing, I recur from fiction to truth ; and

in dedicating to you, in its complete, or at least concluded state, a poetical work which is the longest, the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions, I wish to do honour to myself by the record of many years' intimacy with a man of learning, of talent, of steadiness, and of honour. It is not for minds like ours to give or to receive flattery; yet the praises of sincerity have ever been permitted to the voice of friendship; and it is not for you, nor even for others, but to relieve a heart which has not elsewhere, or lately, been so much accustomed to the encounter of good-will as to withstand the shock firmly, that I thus attempt to commemorate your good qualities, or rather the advantages which I have derived from their exertion. Even the recurrence of the date of this letter, the anniversary of the most unfortunate day of my past existence,* but which cannot poison my future while I retain the resource of your friendship, and of my own faculties, will henceforth have a more agreeable recollection for both, inasmuch as it will remind us of this my attempt to thank you for an indefatigable regard, such as few men have experienced, and no one could experience without thinking better of his species and of himself.

It has been our fortune to traverse together, at various periods, the countries of chivalry, history, and fable—Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy; and what Athens and Constantinople were to us a few years ago, Venice and Rome have been more recently. The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me

* His marriage.

from first to last; and perhaps it may be a pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fairly describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production; and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.

With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether—and have done so. The opinions which have been, or may be, formed on that subject, are now a matter of indifference: the work is to depend on itself and not on the writer; and the author, who has no resources

in his own mind beyond the reputation, transient or permanent, which is to arise from his literary efforts, deserves the fate of authors.

In the course of the following canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within the limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient for the labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflections; and for the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us—though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode—to distrust, or at least defer our judgment, and more narrowly examine our information. The state of literary as well as political party appears to run, or to *have* run, so high, that for a stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language—“*Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte tutte le vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l' antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essere la prima.*” Italy has great names still: Canova, Monti,

Ugo Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti, Morelli, Cicognini, Albrizzi, Mezzophanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca, will secure to the present generation an honourable place in most of the departments of art, science, and belles lettres; and in some the very highest—Europe—the World—has but one Canova.

It has been somewhere said by Alfieri, that “La pianta uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra—e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova.” Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition—a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their neighbours—that man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their genius, their sense of beauty, and amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched “longing after immortality”—the immortality of independence. And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers’ chorus, “Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non é più come era prima,” it was difficult not to contrast this melancholy dirge with the bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns, over the ~~valley~~ of Mont St. Jean, and the betrayal of Genoa, of Italy, of France, and of

the world, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work worthy of the better days of our history. For me,—

“ Non movero mai corda

Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda.”

What Italy has gained by the late transfer of nations, it were useless for Englishmen to inquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus; it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the south, “ verily they *will have* their reward, and at no very distant period.”

Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that country whose real welfare can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever, your obliged and affectionate friend

BYRON.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

I STOOD in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs ;
A palace and a prison on each hand :
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand :
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred
isles !

II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers :
And such she was ;—her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

III

In Venice Tásso's echoes are no more,
 And silent rows the songless gondolier ;
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
 And music meets not always now the ear :
 Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.
 States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die,
 Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
 The pleasant place of all festivity,
 The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy !

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
 Her name in story, and her long array
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
 Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway ;
 Ours is a trophy which will not decay
 With the Rialto ; Shylock and the Moor,
 And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—
 The keystones of the arch ! though all were o'er,
 For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V

The beings of the mind or not of clay :
 Essentially immortal, they create
 And multiply in us a brighter ray
 And more beloved existence : that which Fate
 Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
 Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
 First exiles, then replaces what we hate :
 Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
 And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
 The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy ;
 And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
 And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye :
 Yet there are things whose strong reality
 Outshines our fairy-land ; in shape and hues
 More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
 And the strange constellations which the Muse
 O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse :

VII

I saw or dream'd of such,—but let them go,—
 They came like truth, and disappear'd like dreams ;
 And whatsoe'er they were—are now but so :
 I could replace them if I would ; still teems
 My mind with many a form which aptly seems
 Such as I sought for, and at moments found ;
 Let these too go—for waking Reason deems
 Such overweening phantasies unsound,
 And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

VIII

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
 Have made me not a stranger ; to the mind
 Which is itself, no changes bring surprise ;
 Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
 A country with—ay, or without mankind ;
 Yet was I born where men are proud to be,—
 Not without cause ; and should I leave behind
 The inviolate island of the sage and free,
 And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

IX

Perhaps I loved it well : and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My spirit shall resume it—if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remember'd in my line
With my land's language : if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline,—
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar.

X

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations—let it be—
And light the laurels on a loftier head !
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me—
‘ Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.’
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need ;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted : they have torn me, and I bleed :
I should have known what fruit would spring from
such a seed.

XI

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord ;
And, annual marriage now no more renew'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood !
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—
 An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt ;
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
 Clank over sceptred cities ; nations melt
 From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
 The sunshine for a while, and downward go
 Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt ;
 Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo !
 Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.

XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
 Their gilded collars glittering in the sun ;
 But is not Doria's menace come to pass ?
 Are they not *bridled*?—Venice, lost and won,
 Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
 Sinks, like a seaweed, into whence she rose !
 Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
 Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
 From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV

In youth she was all glory,—a new Tyre ;
 Her very by-word sprung from victory,
 The ' Planter of the Lion,' which through fire
 And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea ;
 Though making many slaves, herself still free,
 And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite ;
 Witness Troy's rival, Candia ! Vouch it, ye
 Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight !
 For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight,

XV

Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust ;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust ;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger : empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what intrals,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice ' lovely walls.

XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar :
See ! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermaster'd victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,
And bidshim thank the bard for freedom and his strains

XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants ; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,
Albion ! to thee : the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children ; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood ; she to me
 Was as a fairy city of the heart,
 Rising like water-columns from the sea,
 Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart ;
 And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,
 Had stamp'd her image in me, and even so,
 Although I found her thus, we did not part ;
 Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
 Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

XIX

I can repeople with the past—and of
 The present there is still for eye and thought,
 And meditation chasten'd down, enough ;
 And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought ;
 And of the happiest moments which were wrought
 Within the web of my existence, some
 From thee, fair Venice ! have their colours caught :
 There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
 Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and
 dumb.

XX

But from their nature will the tannen grow
 Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd rocks,
 Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
 Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
 Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
 The howling tempest, till its height and frame
 Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
 Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
 And grew a giant tree ;—the mind may grow the same.

XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
 Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
 The bare and desolated bosoms : mute
 The camel labours with the heaviest load,
 And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestow'd
 In vain should such example be ; if they,
 Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
 Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
 May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.

XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd,
 Even by the sufferer ; and, in each event,
 Ends : Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,
 Return to whence they came—with like intent,
 And weave their web again ; some, bow'd and bent,
 Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
 And perish with the reed on which they leant ;
 Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
 According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb.

XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
 There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
 Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued ;
 And slight withal may be the things which bring
 Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
 Aside for ever : it may be a sound—
 A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
 A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall
 wound
 Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly
 bound ;

XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
 Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
 But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
 The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
 Which out of things familiar, undesign'd.
 When least we deem of such, calls up to view
 The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,—
 The cold, the changed, perchance the dead—anew,
 The mourn'd, the loved, the lost—too many ! yet how
 few !

XXV

But my soul wanders ; I demand it back
 To meditate amongst decay, and stand
 A ruin amidst ruins ; there to track
 Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
 Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,
 And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
 The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand ;
 Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
 The beautiful, the brave, the lords of earth and sea.

xxvi

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome !
 And even since, and now, fair Italy !
 Thou art the garden of the world, the home
 Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree ;
 Even in thy desert, what is like to thee ?
 Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
 More rich than other climes' fertility ;
 Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
 With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced

XXVII.

The moon is up, and yet it is not night ;
 Sunset divides the sky with her ; a sea
 Of glory streams along the Alpine height
 Of blue Friuli's mountains ; Heaven is free
 From clouds, but of all colours seems to be,—
 Melted to one vast Iris of the West,—
 Where the Day joins the past Eternity,
 While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
 Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest !

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
 With her o'er half the lovely heaven : but still
 Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
 Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
 As Day and Night contending were, until
 Nature reclaim'd her order :—gently flows
 The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
 The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
 Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it
 glows,

XXIX

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
 Comes down upon the waters ; all its hues,
 From the rich sunset to the rising star,
 Their magical variety diffuse :
 And now they change ; a paler shadow strews
 Its mantle o'er the mountains ; parting day
 Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
 With a new colour as it gasps away,
 The last still loveliest,—till—'tis gone—and all is gray,

XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua :—rear'd in air,
 Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
 The bones of Laura's lover : here repair
 Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
 The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
 To raise a language, and his land reclaim
 From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes :
 Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
 With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame.

XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died ;
 The mountain hill, where his latter days
 Went down the vale of years; and 't is their pride—
 An honest pride—and let it be their praise,
 To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
 His mansion and his sepulchre : both plain
 And venerably simple, such as raise
 A feeling more accordant with his strain
 Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental fane.

XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
 Is one of that complexion which seems made
 For those who their mortality have felt,
 And sought a refuge from their hopes decay'd
 In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
 Which shows a distant prospect far away
 Of busy cities, now in vain display'd,
 For they can lure no further ; and the ray
 Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
 And shining in the brawling brook, whereby,
 Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
 With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
 Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.
 If from society we learn to live,
 'T is solitude should teach us how to die ;
 It hath no flatterers ; vanity can give
 No hollow aid : alone—man with his God must strive :

XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
 The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
 In melancholy bosoms, such as were
 Of moody texture from their earliest day,
 And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
 Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
 Which is not of the pangs that pass away ;
 Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
 The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV

Ferrara ! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
 Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
 There seems as 't were a curse upon the seats
 Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
 Of Este, which for many an age made good
 Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
 Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
 Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
 The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame.
 Hark to his strain ! and then survey his cell !
 And see how dearly earn'd Torquato's fame,
 And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell :
 The miserable despot could not quell
 The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
 With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
 Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
 Scatter'd the clouds away ; and on that name attend.

XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time ; while thine
 Would rot in its oblivion—in the sink
 Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
 Is shaken into nothing ; but the link
 Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
 Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn :
 Alfonso ! how thy ducal pageants shrink
 From thee ! if in another station born,
 Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou madest to mourn :

XXXVIII

Thou ! form'd to eat, and be despised, and die,
 Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou
 Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty :
He ! with a glory round his furrow'd brow
 Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
 In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
 And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow
 No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
 That whetstone of the teeth—monotony in wire !

XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade ! 't was his
 In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
 Aim'd with her poison'd arrows,—but to miss.
 Oh, victor unsurpass'd in modern song !
 Each year brings forth its millions ; but how long
 The tide of generations shall roll on,
 And not the whole combined and countless throng
 Compose a mind like thine ? though all in one
 Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form
 a sun.

XL.

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
 The countrymen, before thee born to shine,
 The Bards of Hell and Chivalry : first rose
 The Tuscan father's comedy divine ;
 Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
 The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth
 A new creation with his magic line,
 And, like the Ariosto of the North,
 Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth

XLI

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
 The iron crown of laurel's mimick'd leaves ;
 Nor was the ominous element unjust,
 For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
 Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,
 And the false semblance but disgraced his brow ;
 Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
 Know, that the lightning sanctifies below
 Whate'er it strikes ;—yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII

Italia ! oh Italia ! thou who hast
 The fatal gift of beauty, which became
 A funeral dower of present woes and past,
 On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame,
 And annals graved in characters of flame.
 Oh, God, that thou wert in thy nakedness
 Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
 Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
 To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress :

XLIII.

Then might'st thou more appal ; or, less desired,
 Be homely and be peaceful, undeplored
 For thy destructive charms ; then, still untired,
 Would not be seen the armed torrents pour'd
 Down the deep Alps ; nor would the hostile horde
 Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
 Quaff blood and water ; nor the stranger's sword
 Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
 Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
 The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,
 The friend of Tully : as my bark did skim
 The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
 Came Megara before me, and behind
 Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
 And Corinth on the left ; I lay reclined
 Along the prow, and saw all these unite
 In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight ;

XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but uprear'd
 Barbaric dwellings on their shatter'd site,
 Which only make more mourn'd and more endear'd
 The few last rays of their far-scatter'd light,
 And the crush'd relics of their vanish'd might.
 The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
 These sepulchres of cities, which excite
 Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
 The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine
His country's ruin added to the mass
 Of perish'd states he mourn'd in their decline,
 And I in desolation : all that *was*
 Of then destruction *is* ; and now, alas !
 Rome—Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,
 In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
 The skeleton of her Titanic form,
 Wrecks of another world, whose ashes still are warm.

XLVII

Yet, Italy ! through every other land
 Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
 Mother of Arts ! as once of arms ; thy hand
 Was then our guardian, and is still our guide ;
 Parent of our religion ! whom the wide
 Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven !
 Europe, repentant of her parricide,
 Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
 Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
 Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
 A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
 Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
 Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
 To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
 Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
 Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
 And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.

XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
 The air around with beauty ; we inhale
 The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
 Part of its immortality ; the veil
 Of heaven is half undrawn ; within the pale
 We stand, and in that form and face behold
 What Mind can make, when Nature's self would fail,
 And to the fond idolaters of old
 Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould :

L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
 Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
 Reels with its fulness ; there—for ever there
 Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
 We stand as captives, and would not depart.
 Away !—there need no words nor terms precise,
 The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
 Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes : [prize.
 Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's

LI

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise ?
 Or to more deeply blest Anchises ? or,
 In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies
 Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord of War ?
 And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
 Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
 Feeding on thy sweet cheek ! while thy lips are
 With lava kisses melting while they burn, [urn ?
 Shower'd on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an

LII

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love
 Their full divinity inadequate
 That feeling to express, or to improve,
 The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
 Has moments like their brightest ; but the weight
 Of earth recoils upon us ;—let it go !
 We can recall such visions, and create,
 From what has been, or might be, things which grow
 Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below.

LIII

I leave to learned fingers and wise hands,
 The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
 How well his connoisseurship understands
 The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell :
 Let these describe the undescribable :
 I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
 Wherein that image shall for ever dwell ;
 The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
 That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
 Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
 Even in itself an immortality,
 Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
 The particle of those sublimities
 Which have relapsed to chaos : here repose
 Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
 The starry Galileo, with his woes ;
 Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
 Might furnish forth creation :—Italy ! [rents
 Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand
 Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
 And hath denied, to every other sky,
 Spirits which soar from ruin ; thy decay
 Is still impregnate with divinity,
 Which gilds it with revivifying ray ;
 Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three—
 Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
 The Bard of Prose, creative spirit ! he
 Of the Hundred Tales of love—where did they lay
 Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
 In death as life ? Are they resolved to dust,
 And have their country's marbles nought to say ?
 Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust ?
 Did they not to her breast their filial earth intrust ?

LVII .

Ungrateful Florence ! Dante sleeps afar,
 Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore :
 Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
 Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
 Their children's children would in vain adore
 With the remorse of ages ; and the crown
 Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
 Upon a far and foreign soil had grown, [own.
 His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled—not thine

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
 His dust,—and lies it not her great among,
 With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
 O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue ?
 That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
 The poetry of speech ? No ;—even his tomb
 Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
 No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
 Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom* ?

LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust ;
 Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
 The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
 Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more :
 Happier Ravenna ! on thy hoary shore,
 Fortress of falling empire ! honour'd sleeps
 The immortal exile ;—Arqua, too, her store
 Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps, [weeps.
 While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead and

LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones ?
 Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
 Of gem and marble, to incrust the bones
 Of merchant-dukes ? the momentary dews
 Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
 Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
 Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
 Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
 Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
 In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
 Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies ;
 There be more marvels yet—but not for mine ;
 For I have been accustom'd to entwine
 My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
 Than Art in galleries ; though a work divine
 Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
 Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam
 By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
 Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home ;
 For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
 Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
 The host between the mountains and the shore,
 Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
 And torrents, swell'n to rivers with their gore, [o'er.
 Reek through the sultry plain, with legions scatter'd.

LXIII

Like to a forest fell'd by mountain winds ;
 And such the storm of battle on this day,
 And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
 To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
 An earthquake reel'd unheededly away !
 None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
 And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
 Upon their bucklers for a winding-sheet ;
 Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet !

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
 Which bore them to Eternity ; they saw
 The Ocean round, but had no time to mark
 The motions of their vessel ; Nature's law,
 In them suspended, reck'd not of the awe
 Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
 Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw
 From their down-toppling nests ; and bellowing herds
 Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no
 words.

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now ;
 Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
 Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough ;
 Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain
 Lay where their roots are ; but a brook hath ta'en—
 A little rill of scanty stream and bed—
 A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain ;
 And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead [red
 Made the earth wet, and turn'd the unwilling waters

LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus ! in thy sweetest wave
 Of the most living crystal that was e'er
 The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
 Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
 Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
 Grazes ; the purest god of gentle waters !
 And most serene of aspect, and most clear ;
 Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughterers,
 A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters !

LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
 Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
 Upon a mild declivity of hill,
 Its memory of thee ; beneath it sweeps
 Thy current's calmness ; oft from out it leaps
 The finny darter with the glittering scales,
 Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps ;
 While, chance, some scatter'd water-lily sails [tales.
 Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling

LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place !
 If through the air a zephyr more serene
 Win to the brow, 't is his ; and if ye trace
 Along his margin a more eloquent green,
 If on the heart the freshness of the scene
 Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
 Of weary life a moment lave it clean
 With Nature's baptism,—'t is to him ye must
 Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX

The roar of waters!—from the headlong height
 Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
 The fall of waters! rapid as the light
 The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
 The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
 And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
 Of their great agony, wrung out from this
 Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
 That guard the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
 Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
 With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
 Is an eternal April to the ground,
 Making it all one emerald:—how profound
 The gulf! and how the giant element
 From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
 Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
 With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent!

LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
 More like the fountain of an infant sea
 Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
 Of a new world, than only thus to be
 Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
 With many windings, through the vale:—Look back!
 Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
 As if to sweep down all things in its track,
 Charming the eye with dread,—a matchless cataract

LXXII

Horribly beautiful ! but on the verge,
 From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
 An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
 Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
 Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
 By the distracted waters, bears serene
 Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn :
 Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
 Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
 The infant Alps, which—had I not before
 Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
 Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
 The thundering lauwine—might be worshipp'd more;
 But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
 Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
 Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
 And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear.

LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name ;
 And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
 Like spirits of the spot, as 't were for fame,
 For still they soared unutterably high :
 I've look'd on Ida with a Trojan's eye ;
 Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
 These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
 All, save the lone Soracte's height, display'd
 'Not now in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid

LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
 Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
 And on the curl hangs pausing : not in vain
 May he, who will, his recollections rake,
 And quote in classic raptures, and awake
 The hills with Latian echoes ; I abhor'd
 Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,
 The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word
 In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record

LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turn'd
 My sickening memory ; and, though Time hath
 taught
 My mind to meditate what then it learn'd,
 Yet such the fix'd inveteracy wrought
 By the impatience of my early thought,
 That, with the freshness wearing out before
 My mind could relish what it might have sought.
 If free to choose, I cannot now restore
 Its health ; but what it then detested, still abhor.

LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace ; whom I hated so,
 Not for thy faults, but mine ; it is a curse
 To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
 To comprehend, but never love thy verse :
 Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
 Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
 Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
 Awakening without wounding the touch'd heart,
 Yet fare thee well—upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII

Oh Rome ! my country ! city of the soul !
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
 Lone mother of dead empires ! and control
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance ? Come and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye !
 Whose agonies are evils of a day—
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations ! there she stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe
 An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
 Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago ;
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now :
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers : dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber ! through a marble wilderness ?
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
 Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride ;
 She saw her glories star by star expire,
 And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
 Where the car climb'd the Capitol ; far and wide
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a site :
 Chaos of ruins ! who shall trace the void,
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
 And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night ?

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
 All round us we but feel our way to err :
 The ocean hath its chart, the stars their map,
 And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap ;
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
 Stumbling o'er recollections ; now we clap
 Our hands, and cry 'Eureka' ! it is clear—
 'When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas ! the lofty city ! and alas !
 The trebly hundred triumphs ! [and the day
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away
 Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictured page !—but these shall be
 Her resurrection ; all beside—decay.
 Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see [free !
 That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was

LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
 Triumphant Sylla ! Thou, who didst subdue
 Thy country's foes ere thou wouldest pause to feel
 The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
 Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
 O'er prostrate Asia ;—thou, who with thy frown
 Annihilated senates—Roman, too,
 With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
 With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown—

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath—couldst thou divine
 To what would one day dwindle that which made
 Thee more than mortal ? and that so supine
 By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid ?
 She who was named Eternal, and array'd
 Her warriors but to conquer—she who veil'd
 Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,
 Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd, [hail'd !
 Her rushing wings—Oh ! she who was Almighty

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors ; but our own,
 The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell !—he
 Too sweep'd off senates while he hew'd the throne
 Down to a block—immortal rebel See
 What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
 And famous through all ages ! but beneath
 His fate the moral lurks of destiny ;
 His day of double victory and death [breath,
 Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose former course
 Had all but crown'd him, on the self-same day
 Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
 And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
 And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway
 And all we deem delightful, and consume
 Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
 Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb ?
 Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom !

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue ! yet existent in
 The austerest form of naked majesty,
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
 At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
 Folding his robe in dying dignity,
 An offering to thine altar from the queen
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis ! did he die,
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey ? have ye been
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene ?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome !
 She-wolf ! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
 The milk of conquest yet within the dome
 Where, as a monument of antique art,
 Thou standest :—Mother of the mighty heart,
 Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
 Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
 And thy limbs black with lightning --dost thou yet
 Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget ?

LXXXIX

Thou dost ; but all thy foster-babes are dead—
 The men of iron . and the world hath rear'd
 Cities from out their sepulchres : men bled
 In imitation of the things they fear'd, [steer'd,
 And fought and conquer'd, and the same course
 At apish distance ; but as yet none have,
 Nor could, the same supremacy have near'd,
 Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
 But, vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave.

XC

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
 Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
 With steps unequal [for the Roman's mind
 Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
 With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
 And an immortal instinct which redeem'd—
 The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
 Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd
 At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he beam'd.

XCI

And came—and saw—and conquer'd ! But the man
 Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
 Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
 Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
 With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be
 A listener to itself, was strangely frame ;
 'With but one weakest weakness—vanity,
 Coquettish in ambition, still he aim'd—
 At what ? can he avouch, or answer what he claim'd ?

XCII

And would be all or nothing—nor could wait
 For the sure grave to level him ; few years
 Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,
 On whom we tread : For *this* the conqueror rears
 The arch of triumph ! and for this the tears
 And blood of earth flow on as they have flow'd,
 An universal deluge, which appears
 Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
 And ebbs but to reflow ! Renew thy rainbow, God

XCIII

* What from this barren being do we reap ?
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
 And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale ;
 Opinion an omnipotence,—whose veil
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
 Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too
 much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
 Proud of their trampled nature and so die,
 Bequeathing their hereditary rage
 To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
 War for their chains, and rather than be free,
 Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
 Within the same arena where they see
 Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest between
 Man and his Maker—but of things allow'd,
 Aver'd, and known, and daily, hourly seen—
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd,
 And the intent of tyranny avow'd,
 The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
 The apes of him who humbled once the proud,
 And shook them from their slumbers on the throne:
 Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
 And Freedom find no champion and no child
 Such as Columbia saw arise when she
 Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled ?
 Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
 Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
 Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
 On infant Washington ? Has Earth no more
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore ?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
 And fatal have her Saturnalia been
 To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime ;
 Because the deadly days which we have seen,
 And vile Ambition, that built up between
 Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
 And the base pageant last upon the scene,
 Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
 Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst—his
 second fall. x

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom ! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
 Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind ;
 Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
 The loudest still the tempest leaves behind ,
 Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
 Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
 But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North ;
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,
 Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
 Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
 Standing with half its battlements alone,
 And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
 The garland of eternity, where wave
 The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown ;—
 What was this tower of strength ? within its cave
 What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid?—A woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
 Tomb'd in a palace ? Was she chaste and fair ?
 Worthy a king's, or more—a Roman's bed ?
 What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear ?
 What daughter of her beauties was the heir ?
 How lived, how loved, how died she ? Was she not
 So honoured—and conspicuously there,
 Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
 Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot ?

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
 Who love the lords of others ? such have been
 Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
 Was she a matron of *Cornelia's* mien,
 Or the light air of *Egypt's* graceful queen,
 Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war
 Inveterate in virtue ? Did she lean
 To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar [are.
 Love from amongst her griefs ?—forsuch the affections

CII

Perchance she died in youth : it may be, bow'd
 With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
 That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
 Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
 In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
 Heaven gives its favourites—early death ; yet shed
 A sunset charm around her, and illume
 With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
 Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age —surviving all,
 Charms, kindred, children—with the silver gray
 On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
 It may be, still a something of the day
 When they were braided, and her proud array
 And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
 By Rome—But whither would Conjecture stray ?
 Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
 The wealthiest Roman's wife : Behold his love or pride.

CIV

X I know not why—but standing thus by thee
 It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
 Thou Tomb ! and other days come back on me
 With recollected music, though the tone
 Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
 Of dying thunder on the distant wind ;
 Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
 Till I had bodied forth the heated mind [behind
 Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
 Built me a little bark of hope, once more
 To battle with the ocean and the shocks
 Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
 Which rushes on the solitary shore
 Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear :
 But could I gather from the wave-worn store
 Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer ?
 There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what
 is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on ! their harmony
 Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
 The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
 As I now hear them, in the fading light
 Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
 Answering each other on the Palatine,
 With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,
 And sailing pinions.—Upon such a shrine

What are our petty griefs ?—let me not number mine.;

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
 Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
 On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
 In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
 In subterranean damps, where the owl peep'd,
 Deeming it midnight :—Temples, baths, or halls ?
 Pronounce who can ; for all that Learning reap'd
 From her research hath been, that these are walls—
 Behold the Imperial Mount ! 't is thus the mighty falls.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales ;
'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom, and then Glory—when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page,—'t is better written here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask—A way with words!
draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep,—for here
There is such matter for all feeling :—Man !
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd !
Where are its golden roofs ? where those who dared
[to build ?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base !
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow ?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus or Trajan's? No—'t is that of Time :
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing ; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
 And looking to the stars : they had contain'd
 A spirit which with these would find a home,
 The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
 The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd,
 But yielded back his conquests :—he was more
 Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd
 With household blood and wine, serenely wore
 His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
 Where Rome embraced her heroes ? where the steep
 Tarpeian ? fittest goal of Treason's race,
 The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
 Cured all ambition. Did the conquerors heap
 Their spoils here ? Yes ; and in yon field below,
 A thousand years of silenced factions sleep—
 The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
 And still the eloquent air breathes—burns with Cicero

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood :
 Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
 From the first hour of empire in the bud
 To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd ;
 But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,
 And Anarchy assumed her attributes ;
 Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
 Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
 Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes,

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
 From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
 Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
 The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—
 Rienzi ! last of Romans ! While the tree
 Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf
 Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
 The forum's champion, and the people's chief—
 Her new-born Numa thou—with reign, alas ! too brief.

CXV

Egeria ! sweet creation of some heart
 Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
 As thine ideal breast ; whate'er thou art
 Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,
 The nympholepsy of some fond despair ;
 Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
 Who found a more than common votary there
 Too much adoring ; whatsoe'er thy birth,
 Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
 With thine Elysian water-drops ; the face
 Of thy cave-guarded spring with years unwrinkled,
 Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
 Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
 Art's works ; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
 Prison'd in marble, bubbling from the base
 Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap [creep.
 The rill runs o'er, and round fern, flowers, and ivy

CXVII

Fantastically tangled : the green hills
 Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
 The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass ;
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
 Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes,
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass ;
 The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
 Kiss'd by the breath of heaven seems colour'd by its
 Skies. x

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
 Egeria ! thy all heavenly bosom beating
 For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover ;
 The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
 With her most starry canopy, and seating
 Thyself by thine adorer, what befell ?
 This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
 Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
 Haunted by holy Love—the earliest oracle !

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
 Blend a celestial with a human heart ;
 And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
 Share with immortal transports ? could thine art
 Make them indeed immortal, and impart
 The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
 Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—
 The dull satiety which all destroys—
 And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloys

CXX

Alas ! our young affections run to waste,
 Dr water but the desert ; whence arise
 But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
 Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
 Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
 And trees whose gums are poisons ; such the plants
 Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
 O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
 For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI

Oh Love ! no habitant of earth thou art—
 An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,—
 A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,—
 But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
 The naked eye, thy form, as it should be ;
 The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
 Even with its own desiring phantasy,
 And to a thought such shape and image given,
 As haunts the unquench'd soul—parch'd, wearied,
 wrong, and riven.

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
 And fevers into false creation :—where,
 Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seiz'd?
 In him alone. Can Nature show so fair ?
 Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
 Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
 The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
 Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
 And overpowers the page where it would bloom again ?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves—'t is youth's frenzy—but the cure
 Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds
 Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
 Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
 Ideal shape of such ; yet still it binds
 The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
 Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds ;
 The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun, [undone
 Seems ever near the prize—wealthiest when most

CXXIV.

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
 Sick—sick ; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
 Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
 Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
 But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
 Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'t is the same,
 Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—
 For all are meteors with a different name,
 And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV

Few—none—find what they love or could have loved
 Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
 Necessity of loving, have removed
 Antipathies—but to recur, ere long,
 Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong ;
 And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
 And miscreator, makes and helps along
 Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
 Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all
 have trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature ; 't is not in
 The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
 This uneradicable taint of sin,
 This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
 Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
 The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew—
 Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see,
 And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
 The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly—'t is a base
 Abandonment of reason to resign
 Our right of thought—our last and only place
 Of refuge ; this, at least, shall still be mine :
 Though from our birth the faculty divine
 Is chain'd and tortured—cabin'd, cribb'd, confined
 And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
 Too brightly on the unprepared mind, [blind..
 The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the

CXXVIII.

Arches on arches ! as it were that Rome,
 Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
 Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
 Her Coliseum stands ; the moonbeams shine
 As 't were its natural torches, for divine
 Should be the light which streams here to illumine
 This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
 Of contemplation ; and the azure gloom
 Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
 And shadows forth its glory. There is given
 Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
 A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
 His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
 And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
 For which the palace of the present hour
 Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX

Oh Time ! the beautifier of the dead
 *Adorner of the ruin, comforter
 And only healer when the heart hath bled ;
 Time ! the corrector where our judgments err,
 The test of truth, love—sole philosopher,
 For all beside are sophists—from thy thrift,
 Which never loses though it doth defer—
 Time, the avenger ! unto thee I lift
 My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
 And temple more divinely desolate,
 Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
 Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate :
 If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
 Hear me not ; but if calmly I have borne
 Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
 Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
 This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they* not mourn ?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
 Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis !
 Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long—
 Thou who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
 And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
 For that unnatural retribution—just,
 Had it but been from hands less near—in this
 Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust ! [must.
 Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou shalt, and

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incur'd
 For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
 I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd
 With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound ;
 But now my blood shall not sink in the ground ;
 To thee I do devote it—*thou* shalt take
 The vengeance which shall yet be sought and found,
 Which if *I* have not taken for the sake—
 But let that pass—I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth,'t is not that now
 I shrink from what is suffer'd: let him speak
 Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
 Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak ;
 But in this page a record will I seek.
 Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
 Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
 The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
 And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse !

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness.—Have I not—
 Hear me, my mother Earth ! behold it, Heaven !
 Have I not had to wrestle with my lot ?
 Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven ?
 Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
 Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away ?
 And only not to desperation driven,
 Because not altogether of such clay
 As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
 Have I not seen what human things could do ?
 From the loud roar of foaming calumny
 To the small whisper of thee as paltry few,
 And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
 The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
 Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
 And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
 Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain :
 My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
 And my frame perish even in conquering pain ;
 But there is that within me which shall tire
 Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire ;
 Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
 Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
 Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
 In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set.—Now welcome, thou dread power !
 Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
 Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
 With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear ;
 Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
 Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
 Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
 That we become a part of what has been,
 And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
 In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,
 As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.
 And wherefore slaughter'd ? wherefore, but because
 Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
 And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not ?
 What matters where we fall to fill the maws
 Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot ?
 Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie :
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch
 who won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
 Were with his heart, and that was far away ;
 He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
 All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire
 And unavenged ? Arise ! ye Goths, and glut your ire !

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam ;
 And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
 And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
 Dashing or winding as its torrent strays ;
 Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
 Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
 My voicesounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
 On the arena void—seats crush'd—walls bow'd—
 And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely
[loud.]

CXLIII

A ruin—yet what ruin ! from its mass
 Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd ;
 Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
 And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
 Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd ?
 Alas ! developed, opens the decay,
 When the colossal fabric's form is near'd :
 It will not bear the brightness of the day, [away..
 Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
 Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there ;
 When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,.
 And the low night-breeze waves along the air
 The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
 Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head ;
 When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
 Then in this magic circle raise the dead ;
 Heroes have trod this spot—'t is on their dust ye tread.

CXLV

‘ While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand ;
 ‘ When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall ; [land
 ‘ And when Rome falls—the World.’ From our own
 Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
 In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
 Ancient ; and these three mortal things are still
 On their foundations, and unalter'd all ;
 Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
 The World, the same wide den—of thieves, or what

[ye will]

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime—
 Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
 From Jove to Jesus—spared and blest by time ;
 Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
 Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
 His way through thorns to ashes—glorious dome !
 Shalt thou not last ? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
 Shiver upon thee—sanctuary and home
 Of art and piety—Pantheon !—pride of Rome !

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts !
 Despoil'd yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
 A holiness appealing to all hearts—
 To art a model ; and to him who treads
 Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
 Her light through thy sole aperture ; to those
 Who worship, here are altars for their beads ;
 And they who feel for genius may repose
 Their eyes on honour'd forms, whose busts around
 them close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
 What do I gaze on ? Nothing : Look again !
 Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight—
 Two insulated phantoms of the brain :
 It is not so ; I see them full and plain—
 An old man, and a female young and fair,
 Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
 The blood is nectar :—but what doth she there,
 With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare ?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
 Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took
 Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
 Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
 Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
 No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives,
 Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
 She sees her little bud put forth its leaves—
 What may the fruit be yet ? I know not—Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,
 The milk of his own gift : it is her sire
 To whom she renders back the debt of blood
 Born with her birth. No ; he shall not expire
 While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
 Of health and holy feeling can provide
 Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
 Than Egypt's river : from that gentle side
 Drink, drink and live, old man ! Heaven's realm holds
 no such tide.

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
 Has not thy story's purity ; it is
 A constellation of a sweeter ray,
 And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
 Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss
 Where sparkle distant worlds :—Oh, holiest nurse !
 No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
 To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
 With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII

Turn to the mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,
 Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
 Colossal copyist of deformity
 Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's
 Enormous model, doom'd the artist's toils
 To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
 His shrunken ashes, raise this dome : How smiles
 The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth
 To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth !

CLII

But lo ! the dome — the vast and wondrous dome.
 To which Diana's marvel was a cell —
 Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb !
 I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle ; —
 Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
 The hyæna and the jackal in their shade ;
 I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
 Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
 Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd ;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old, or altars new,
 Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —
 Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
 Since Zion's desolation, when that He
 Forsook his former city, what could be,
 Of earthly structures, in his honour piled,
 Of a sublimer aspect ? Majesty,
 Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty all are aisled
 In this eternal ark of worship undefiled

CLV

Enter : its grandeur overwhelms thee not ;
 And why ? It is not lessen'd ; but thy mind
 Expanded by the genius of the spot,
 Has grown colossal, and can only find
 A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
 Thy hopes of immortality ; and thou
 Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
 See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
 His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI

Thou movest, but increasing with the advance,
 Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise
 Deceived by its gigantic elegance ;
 Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise—
 All musical in its immensities ;
 Rich marbles, richer painting—shrines where flame
 The lamps of gold—and haughty dome which vies
 In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
 Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the clouds must
 claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all ; but piecemeal thou must break,
 To separate contemplation, the great whole ;
 And as the ocean many bays will make
 That ask the eye—so here condense thy soul
 To more immediate objects, and control
 Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
 Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
 In mighty graduations, part by part,
 The glory which at once upon thee did not dart

CLVIII

Not by its fault—but thine : Our outward sense
 Is but of gradual grasp—and as it is
 That what we have of feeling most intense
 Outstrips our faint expression ; even so this
 Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
 Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
 Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
 Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
 Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd ; there is more
 In such a survey than the sating gaze
 Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
 The worship of the place, or the mere praise
 Of art and its great masters, who could raise
 What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan,
 The fountain of sublimity displays
 Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
 Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
 Laocoön's torture dignifying pain—
 A father's love and mortal's agony
 With an immortal's patience blending : Vain
 The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
 And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
 The old man's clench ; the long-venom'd chain
 Rivets the living links,—the enormous asp
 Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
 The God of life, and poesy, and light—
 The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
 All radiant from his triumph in the fight ;
 The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright
 With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
 And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
 And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
 Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form—a dream of Love,
 Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
 Long'd for a deathless lover from above,
 And madden'd in that vision—are exprest
 All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
 The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
 When each conception was a heavenly guest—
 A ray of immortality—and stood
 Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god !

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
 The fire which we endure, it was repaid
 By him to whom the energy was given
 Which this poetic marble hath array'd
 With an eternal glory—which, if made
 By human hands, is not of human thought ;
 And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
 One ringlet in the dust—nor hath it caught
 A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which
 't was wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
 The being who upheld it through the past ?
 Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
 He is no more—these breathings are his last ;
 His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
 And he himself as nothing :—if he was
 Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
 With forms which live and suffer—let that pass—
 His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass.

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
 That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
 And spreads the dim and universal pall [cloud
 Through which all things grow phantoms ; and the
 Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,
 Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
 A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
 To hover on the verge of darkness ; rays
 Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
 To gather what we shall be when the frame
 Shall be resolved to something less than this
 Its wretched essence ; and to dream of fame,
 And wipe the dust from off the idle name
 We never more shall hear,—but never more,
 Oh, happier thought ! can we be made the same :
 It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore [gore.
 These fardels of the heart—the heart whose sweat was

CLXVII

Hark ! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
 A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
 Such as arises when a nation bleeds
 With some deep and immedicable wound ; [ground,
 Through storm and darkness yawns the rending
 The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
 Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd,
 And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
 She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou ?
 Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead ?
 Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
 Some less majestic, less beloved head ?
 In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
 The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
 Death hush'd that pang for ever : with thee fled
 The present happiness and promised joy
 Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it sem'd to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it be,
 Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored !
 Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
 And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
 Her many griefs for ONE ; for she had pour'd
 Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
 Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,
 And desolate consort—vainly wert thou wed !
 The husband of a year ! the father of the dead !

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made ;
 Thy bridal's fruit is ashes : in the dust
 The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,
 The love of millions ! How we did intrust
 Futurity to her ! and, though it must
 Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
 Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
 Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
 Like stars to shepherd's eyes :—'t was but a meteor
 beam'd.

CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her ; for she sleeps well :
 The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
 Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
 Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung
 Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstung
 Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate
 Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
 Against their blind omnipotence a weight
 Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or late,—

CLXXII

These might have been her destiny ; but no,
 Our hearts deny it : and so young, so fair,
 Good without effort, great without a foe ;
 But now a bride and mother—and now *there !*
 How many ties did that stern moment tear !
 From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast
 Is link'd the electric chain of that despair,
 Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest
 The land which loved thee so that none could love
 thee best.

CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi ! navell'd in the woody hills
 So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
 The oak from his foundation, and which spills
 The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
 Its form against the skies, reluctant spares
 The oval mirror of thy glassy lake ;
 And calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
 A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
 All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV

And near, Albano's scarce divided waves
 Shine from a sister valley ;—and afar
 The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
 The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
 'Arms and the man,' whose re-ascending star
 Rose o'er an empire :—but beneath thy right
 Tully reposed from Rome ; and where yon bar
 Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
 The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
 And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
 His task and mine alike are nearly done ;
 Yet once more let us look upon the sea ;
 The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
 And from the Alban Mount we now behold
 Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which when we
 Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold .
 Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades : long years—
 Long, though not very many—since have done
 Their work on both ; some suffering and some tears
 Have left us nearly where we had begun :
 Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run ;
 We have had our reward, and it is here,—
 That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
 And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
 As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII

Oh ! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
 With one fair Spirit for my minister,
 That I might all forget the human race,
 And, hating no one, love but only her !
 Ye elements !—in whose ennobling stir
 I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
 Accord me such a being ? Do I err
 In deeming such inhabit many a spot ?
 Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
 There is society, where none intrudes,
 By the deep Sea, and music in its roar :
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
 From these our interviews, in which I steal
 From all I may be, or have been before,
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel
 What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll !
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain :
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
 Stops with the shore ; upon the watery plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
 And shake him from thee; the vile strength he
 wields.

For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies;
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,
 And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
 Their clay creator the vain title take
 Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
 Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
 Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
 And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
 The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
 Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou;—
 Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow:
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
 Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,—
 Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
 Dark-heaving —boundless, endless, and sublime,
 The image of eternity, the throne
 Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
 The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
 Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward : from a boy
 I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
 Were a delight ; and if the freshening sea
 Made them a terror—it was a pleasing fear,
 For I was as it were a child of thee,
 And trusted to thy billows far and near,
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done, my song hath ceased, my theme
 Has died into an echo ; it is fit
 The spell should break of this protracted dream.
 The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
 My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ ;
 Would it were worthier ! but I am not now
 That which I have been—and my visions flit
 Less palpably before me—and the glow
 Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell ! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger ;—yet—farewell !
Ye ! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell ;
Farewell ! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the moral of his strain.

NOTES.

I

1. **The Bridge of Sighs.**—[Ital. *Ponte dei Sospiri*]. A famous bridge over the Rio Canal in Venice connecting the Doge's palace and the State prisons. It was so called from a feeling of compassion, because condemned prisoners passed over it on their way to execution. Byron's reference to it has attached to it a great deal of pathetic interest, but in reality the bridge was only a means of communication between the criminal courts sitting in the Ducal Palace and the criminal prison across the canal. With reference to this falsely sentimental interest, Ruskin in his *Stones of Venice* writes:—'No prisoner whose name is worth remembering or whose sorrow deserved sympathy ever crossed the Bridge of Sighs, which is the centre of the Byronic ideal of Venice.'

3. **Her structures rise.**—The buildings in Venice, erected on very low islets, seem to rise up suddenly from out of the water, as if called into existence by the waving of a magician's wand.

5. The sight of Venice calls up dim recollections of the Past extending back a thousand years, and these recollections like the mighty, outstretched wings of some huge bird, overshadow the land.

7. **Many a subject land.**—After the conquest of Constantinople by the Doge Dandolo, in 1204, and upon the division of the Byzantine Empire, Venice received a large accession of territory. The Venetians had many possessions on the mainland. In 1386, they captured Corfu, Durazzo, Argos, &c.; and in 1405 they conquered Vicenza, Belluni, Verona, Padua, and other places, and ruled over the Dalmatian coast.

8. **The winged Lion's marble piles.**—The reference is to the Lion of St. Mark, a winged lion, the heraldic device of the ancient Republic of Venice, whose patron Saint was St. Mark. One of the marble columns in the Piazzetta at Venice facing the sea is surmounted by the image of a winged lion in bronze.

II

1. **A sea Cybele.**—In Roman mythology, Cybele is the daughter of Coelus and Terra, and the wife of Saturn. She is represented as wearing a mural crown, and riding in a chariot drawn by lions, or seated on a throne with lions at her side. Cybele was a goddess of the earth and not of the sea. Venice with her lions overlooking the sea looks a goddess of the sea.

2. **Tiara.**—A triple crown. The name is given to the round high cap or head-dress worn by the Pope, encircled with three crowns. The towers that rise above Venice correspond in the simile to the mural crown worn by Cybele.

5. **Her daughters.....**—Venetian fathers endowed or furnished their daughters with marriage portions derived by conquest or by commerce from foreign lands.

5 & 6. In these lines the poet describes the greatness and grandeur of Venice in the days of her glory. She was the centre of commerce in Europe: she monopolized the trade of Egypt and, through Egypt, the trade of India. She established financial colonies in all great towns and imported the wondrous fabrics and rare spices of the East. Her wealth became enormous, and her power south of the Alps was supreme.

6. **The exhaustless East.**—This calls to mind Wordsworth's line in his Sonnet on Venice—

“Once did she hold the glorious East in fee.”

8. **In purple.....**—She possessed imperial sovereignty. [The purple robe or mantle worn by the Roman Emperors was an emblem of Imperial rank and dignity. The colour takes its name from the *purpura*, a fish from the shell of which the dye was obtained.]

III

1. **Tasso's echoes.**—Tasso's songs are no longer sung. [Tasso, a great Italian poet, was born at Sorrento in 1544, and died at Rome in 1595. His most famous work was *Gierrusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered), translated into English by Fairfax. The songs referred to are the songs that occur in this poem, which used to be sung by the gondoliers of Venice. “The well-known song of the gondoliers” says Hobhouse, “of alternate stanzas, from Tasso's *Jerusalem* has died with the independence of Venice.”]

2. **Gondolier.**—A man who rows a *gondola* which is a kind of boat used in the canals of Venice.

5. **Those days.**—Those palmy days of Venice, when she was the pleasant place of all festivity, and sounds of revelry were heard.

9. **The masque of Italy.**—A masque is a festive entertainment of music and dancing in which the company wear masks or are otherwise disguised by dominoes. It was a kind of amusement that was very popular in Italy. Venice, of all places in Italy, was remarkable for its feasts and entertainments. Here was concentrated, as it were, all the Italian love of pleasure and enjoyment.

IV

1. **Us.**—The people of England.

She hath a spell.—She exercises a charm over our minds;

1-2. **Beyond her name in story.**—Which is not due merely to her renown in history: which is not derived altogether from any historical associations.

3. **Mighty shadows.**—The great men who once swayed the destinies of Venice, who have ceased to be realities and are now mere names.

Whose dim forms despond.—To *despond* is to lose hope and spirit and courage. How these dim or shadowy forms can be said to despond, is by no means clear. It looks as if Byron wanted a word to rhyme with *beyond* and was careless as to how he expressed his thought.

4. **The dogeless city's**.....The city that has lost its independence and has no longer a doge at its head. [Doge, from Latin *dus*, a leader, was formerly the title of the first Magistrate in the Republic of Venice. The first doge of Venice elected for life was Paolo Anafesto in 697. The office was abolished by the French in 1797.]

5. **Ours is a trophy.**—The memorials of Venice preserved to us, English, are not memorials of wood and stone and metal that perish in the course of ages. They are literary characters, 'beings of the mind,' the creations of genius that will live for ever.

6. **The Rialto.**—[Ital. *Ponte di Rialto.*] "A famous bridge over the Grand Canal in Venice, deriving its name from the quarter of the city in which it is situated. This section, so called from *Rivo-alto*, is one of the islands upon which Venice is built, and gave its name first to the Exchange which was built upon it, and later to the bridge, by which it was reached. The Rialto was long the centre of trade and commercial life in the city."—WHEELER'S *Familiar Allusions*.

"Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances."

—SHAKESPEARE'S *Merchant of Venice*.

Shylock and the Moor.—The former a character in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, the latter, Othello the Moor, a character in Shakespeare's great play of Othello. ["Shylock still darkens the Rialto with his frown, the lordly form of Othello yet stalks across the piazza of St. Mark's, and every veil that flutters in the breeze shrouds the roguish black eyes of Jessica."—HILLARD.]

7. **Pierre.**—A conspirator in Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," impelled to treason by a mixture of patriotism and misanthropy.

8. **The keystones of the arch.**—The keystone is the central or topmost stone of an arch, on which the stability and permanence of the arch depends. Take the keystone away and the arch

will fall to pieces. So it is with these great names and the famous literary works in which they occur which to us preserve more than any thing else the memory of Venice. The arch here is not the arch of a bridge like the Rialto which may fall to pieces, but it is the arch built or created by the mind and the imagination.

9. If Venice were completely destroyed and her shores left desolate, to us she would still be inhabited by Shylock and Othello and Pierre, and all the other characters made familiar to us in the literature of England. In our imagination Venice would still be alive with them and with the scences in which they took part.

V

1. **The beings**.....—The creations of the mind: the forms of things unknown, bodied forth by the imagination, which the poet's pen turns into shape. These not being of clay, are imperishable.

2 & 3. **They create**.....—They brighten our minds and make our lives happier. The works of a great writer, the creations of his imagination, are a source of real pleasure.

In the third Canto, St. vi, Byron writes:

“ ‘Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.”

4. **That which Fate**.....—The meaning here is not easy to make out. Both thought and expression are obscure. What does Fate prohibit or deny to dull life? Is it happiness or pleasure or contentment? Is the poet referring to the pleasure we derive from the creations of other men's minds or from the creations of our own minds? It is all too vague and indefinite.

6. **These spirits**.—Apparently, ‘the beings of the mind.’

7. **First exiles**.....—These creations of the Imagination first banish from the mind things hateful to us, and then supply their place with things that we love.

The poet is apparently thinking of the disappointments and vexations of his own life and of the relief he found when he turned to literature.

8. **Watering the heart**.—Refreshing the weary heart.

Early flowers.—The bright hopes and aspirations of youth, which fade and die as we grow older, or ‘the airy images and shapes which dwell in the soul's haunted cell.’ See Canto III, St. v.

9. **The void**.—The vacancy left in our hearts by the withering of our youthful hopes. This void is filled by other hopes and other pleasures.

Void, as now pronounced, does not rhyme with *died*.

VI

1 & 2. The following quotation from *Don Juan* explains [these lines]:—

“ In youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And now because I feel it growing dull.”

In youth, when the heart is full of hope and the mind of ‘airy images and shapes’, we fly to poetry as a pleasurable occupation: in old age, when the heart is emptied of all its hopes and the mind has become dull, we still seek solace from the same source.

3. **Peoples many a page.**—Causes many a page to be written: causes an author to fill the pages of his work with the creations of his mind.

4. He applies what he has said to himself, and to his own poem that he was writing.

6. **Outshines.**—Far surpasses in beauty the conceptions of the poet’s mind.

Our fairy-land.—The world of fancy and imagination in which the poet lives and moves and has his being.

7-9. In the real world in which we live, the sky above us is studded with beautiful constellations, all subject to law and order. The poet living in his own world of imagination, fills it with the creations of his mind, all strange and fanciful. The forms and figures which his imagination bodies forth, and which fill the firmament of his world, shine like the stars in the sky of our real world.

9. **Her wild universe.**—The realm of poetry in which the imagination runs riot.

VII

1. **Such.**—The strange constellations referred to in the previous stanza.

2. When they first occurred to my mind, they seemed very real indeed, but they vanished like the unsubstantial visions of a dream.

4. **I could.....**—If I wished, my imagination could create other forms and figures to take the place of those that have vanished. His is a powerfully imaginative mind.

Byron had his poetic dreams and visions. His imagination as a poet had bodied forth the forms of things unseen and unknown. They had seemed very real to him, at first, but they vanished into airy nothing when sober Reason swayed his mind.

8. **Overweening phantasies**—Foolish, presumptuous fancies.

VIII

1. **I've taught me.**—I have taught myself: I have learnt other languages,—the Italian language more especially.

2. **Have made me.**—In a foreign land, amongst foreigners, I have learnt to be as one of them: I have adopted their manners, their habits, their modes of living.

3. **Which is itself.**—Cp. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I, ll. 254-55.

“The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.”

6. **Yet was I born.**—It may well be doubted whether genuine feeling is expressed in these lines. There was not much of patriotism in Byron, and if Englishmen are proud of England, Byron hardly shared in this feeling.

8. **The inviolate island.**—England, the home of learning, and the home of liberty, whose shores are safe from the invader.

IX

1. **And should I lay.....**—And should it be my fate to be buried in a foreign land.

[Here again there is a note of insincerity. In a letter to a friend Byron wrote as follows:—“I believe the thought would drive me mad on my death-bed, could I suppose any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcass back to your soil. I would not even feed your worms if I could help it.” Byron could not have had much love for his native land, but he was a creature of moods, and his utterances cannot be taken seriously.

3. **My spirit**—My spirit shall return to my own country, if it is possible for disembodied spirits to choose for themselves a place of refuge, a place where they may dwell in peace.

4-5. I cherish the hope that I shall be remembered in the family to which I belong as long as the language of my country endures. There were Byrons who are remembered as soldiers and sailors. He hopes that Byron the poet will be remembered also.

5. **Line.**—Lineage, family.

6-7. **If too fond.....**—If these hopes of mine are too foolish and extravagant, if I allow my hopes to stray beyond what I have a right to expect.

9. **Of hasty growth.**—As Byron said of himself, he awoke one morning and found himself famous. And now he is afraid that his decline may be as sudden or as rapid as his rise to fame.

X

1. **The temple.**—The temple of Fame. The poet fears that it may not be his fate to find a niche in his country's temple of fame, that posterity may not remember and honour him as one of the

great men of his country. It is not necessary to suppose that Byron is alluding to Westminster Abbey, and to the Poet's Corner. Cf. Beattie's *Minstrel*. I. 1. 2

"The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar."

2. **Let it be.**—It does not matter: I am quite content.

3. And light the laurels.....—Let the poet's crown of glory encircle the brow of some one worthier than myself.

5. "Sparta hath....."—"This was the answer of the mother of Brasidas, the Lacedaemonian General to the memory of her son," Brasidas, one of the Lacedaemonians of Sparta, was killed in the battle of Amphipolis, in B. C. 422, fighting against the Athenians. Byron means that he is willing that it may be said of him, England can boast of better poets than himself. He is not ambitious and does not care if an inferior position is assigned to him 'in Fame's eternal bead-roll.'

6-7. The proud, defiant and self-reliant spirit of Byron speaks in these lines. He wants no sympathy from any one, and whatever his sufferings may be, he will bear them uncomplainingly. His sufferings are the natural consequences of his own misdeeds. As we sow, so must we reap. He is willing to take his punishment as a man. In the third Canto, Byron describes himself as

* * * * " Still enough the same
In strength to bear what time cannot abate
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing fate."

xi

The spouseless Adriatic.—The allusion in these lines is to the ceremony of the Espousal of the Adriatic which used to be annually gone through in Venice. Once a year, on Ascension Day, the Doge went out in his splendidly decorated state-galley, called the Bucentaur, to wed the Adriatic. This wedding ceremony, symbolising the naval supremacy of Venice, owed its origin to the victory of the Venetians over the fleet of Frederick Barbarossa. A consecrated ring was each year thrown into the sea in the presence of the papal nuncio and the diplomatic corps, with the Declaration by the Doge, “We wed thee, O Sea, in sign of true and perpetual dominion.” Wordsworth alludes to this in his Sonnet on the Extinction of the Venetian Republic :—

"And when she took unto hereself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea."

8. **The Bucentaur.**—See note above. 'There have been only three Bucentauri. One was built in 1520. Another, still more splendid, was built in the following century. The third and last was constructed in 1725 and destroyed in 1797. The ceremony of the Espousal of the Adriatic is of higher antiquity than the construction of the first Bucentaur. [The name is derived from Greek, *bous*, ox and *centaurus*, centaur, a fabulous being half man and

half horse. The state barge of Venice was probably so called because a figure of this monster was originally depicted on the vessel or carved at its prow.]

7. An Emperor sued.—The German Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, who prostrated himself before the Pope in front of the Church of St. Mark and sued for peace.

XII

1. The Suabian.—The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. (Born 1121, died 1090 A. D.) He was the son of Frederick, Duke of Suabia, and received the imperial crown of Germany on the death of his uncle.

[“Suabia, or Swabia (German, *Schwaben*) was an ancient German duchy, which, after bearing the name of Alemannia from its original inhabitants the Alemanni, changed it to Suevia or Schwanenland, in consequence of the incursion of the Suevi. From 1512 to 1806, Suabia formed one of the ten circles into which the German Empire was divided. It is now divided between Wurtemberg, Baden, Bavaria, Hohenzollern, and Lichlenstein.”]

And now.....reigns.—That is to say when Byron wrote in 1818, but Venice no longer forms part of the Austrian dominions. In 1797, the French took possession of the city, but subsequently it became part of the Austrian Empire. In 1866, the city and province were ceded to Napoleon III, under whose auspices they were united to the kingdom of Italy.

2. An Emperor tramples.—The Austrian Emperor oppresses the people. Venice under the Austrian sway was ruled with a rod of iron.

3. Kingdoms are shrunk.—Territories that were once kingdoms and principalities have now become merely provinces of the Austrian Empire.

3-4. Chains clank.—Cities that were once independent and self-governed, exercising royal authority, are now held in bondage by the Austrians.

[At one time there was a Lombard Empire that extended from the Adriatic to the Savoyan Alps. After the overthrow of this Empire, a number of independent duchies and republics, Mantua, Milan, Venice, Genoa, &c. were gradually formed, originally as fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire, but soon practically independent. Most of these ‘kingdoms’ and sceptered cities in course of time became absorbed in the Austrian Empire.

4-5. Nations melt.....—Nations bask for a time in the sunshine of prosperity but this very prosperity, when enjoyed too long, is the cause of their decline and fall. When decay sets in, they rapidly descend from the height of power to which they had attained, even as the snow gathered on the lofty mountain sides, melted by the heat of the sun, rushes down into the valleys below.

7. **Lauwine**—A german word for an avalanche.

8. **Oh for one hour.....**—Would that Dandolo were alive now for one hour. He would free Venice from the yoke of the oppressor.

[Dandolo was made Doge of Venice in 1192 when he was eighty-four years old. He died at Constantinople in 1205 at the age of ninety-seven].

10. **Byzantium's conquering foe**—At the storming of Byzantium or Constantinople, Dandolo, old and blind as he was, is said to have led the attack.

XIII

In his *Stones of Venice*, Ruskin gives a glowing description of St. Mark's and the 'steeds of brass.....' The glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a confusion of delight amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the 'St. Mark's Lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars.' The steeds of brass are four bronze horses over the entrance to St. Mark's Church, which were brought from Constantinople by Dandolo.

3. **Doria's menace**.—The threatening answer of Peter Doria, commander of the Genoese, to the Venetians when they sued for peace. "Ye shall have no peace," he said, "until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, that are upon the porch of your Evangelist, St. Mark. When we have bridled them, we shall keep you quiet."

4. **Are they not bridled?**?—The answer is yes. The horses were bridled, though not by the Genoese, in 1797, when the French took possession of Venice, and subsequently, when Venice passed under the yoke of Austria.

5. **Her thirteen hundred.....**—Venice is supposed to have been founded in the 5th century, and may be said to have enjoyed freedom till the end of the 18th century, are roughly thirteen hundred years.

6. **Sinks like a seaweed**.—There appears to have been some fear that the islands on which Venice was built or the houses on piles would subside and become submerged. Shelley alludes to this in his *Euganean Hills* :—

"Sun-girt city, thou hast been
Ocean's child, then his queen ;
Now has come a darker day.
And thou soon must be his prey."

8-9. That would be a better fate, the poet thinks, to sink in destruction beneath the waves and so escape from the thraldom of her 'foreign foes,' the Austrians.

Infamous repose.—A peace or tranquillity disgraceful to the people of Venice inasmuch as it is obtained at the cost of freedom, and by tame submission to the oppression of their foreign rulers.

XIV

1. **A new Tyre.**—Tyre, famous for its commerce in ancient times, was one of the most celebrated cities of Phoenicia. It was built partly on an island and partly on the mainland. Alexander the Great besieged and took it in 332 B.C., but it continued to be a place of importance till it came into the hands of the Turks. What Tyre was in ancient times, Venice was in later times.

2. **Her very by-word.**—The name by which she was commonly known. This 'by-word,' or proverbial name was the 'Planter of the Lion,' the standard of the republic being the Lion of St. Mark.

[The word *byword* is now more frequently used in the sense of a term of contempt and reproach.]

6. **Europe's bulwark.**—Venice in the 16th and 17th centuries was the defence of Europe against the Ottomites or Ottoman Turks, and largely helped to check their advance.

[The name Ottomite or Ottoman is from Ottoman, Othman or Osman, a great Turkish leader, who made himself all powerful in Western Asia about the year 1300.]

7. **Witness Troy's rival.**—Let Candia, Troy's rival, bear witness to the power of Venice in former times and to the protection she afforded to Europe against the Turks.

[Candia was defended by the Venetians against the Turks for no less than twenty-four years and was conquered by the latter only after a desperate struggle about the middle of the 17th century. Candia was Troy's rival only in the sense that like Troy, the siege of which lasted ten years, she held out bravely when besieged by the Turks, for a great many years. In no other respect was Candia like Troy.

Vouch it—Bear witness to it. Confirm the truth of it. *Vouch* is in the imperative mood.

8. **Lepanto's fight.**—The reference is to the great naval battle of Lepanto, fought in the Gulf of Lepanto near Corinth, on the 7th October 1571, when the Venetian and Austrian fleets under Don John of Austria, defeated and destroyed the Ottoman fleet. The decline of the Turkish power in Europe dates from this memorable event.

XV

1. The long line or succession of Doges, like statues of fragile glass which shatter and crumble to pieces, has decayed and turned into dust. Nothing remains of them.

2. **Are.**—The verb should be in the singular number.

4. **Bespeaks.**—Betokens, indicates, bears witness to. *Bespeak* is also used in the sense of 'to engage or arrange for beforehand.'

The pageant.... trust.—The pomp and grandeur of the office entrusted to them.

7. **Thin streets.**—Thinly peopled streets.

Foreign aspects.—The presence and appearance of foreigners in the city. The Austrians, of course, are meant.

XVI

1. **When Athens' armies.....**—The reference is to the expedition undertaken by the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War against Syracuse which in ancient times was one of the most magnificent cities in the world. The expedition ended in a great disaster to the Athenians, many of whom were taken prisoners and made slaves.

3. **Redemption.....**—Those who were in captivity owed their freedom to the poetry of Athens.

[It is related in Plutarch's life of Nicias that captives were emancipated who were able to recite passages from the plays of Euripides, a celebrated Athenian dramatist, so charmed were the Syracusans by his poetry.]

Attic.—Belonging or pertaining to Attica in Greece or to Athens, its principal city.

4. No money was paid as ransom for the deliverance of the captives. It was only the poetry of Athens, heard by the Syracusans, which obtained for them freedom.

5. **Tragic hymn.**—Euripides was a writer of tragedies,—*Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Iphigenia*, *Orestes*, &c.

6. **The o'ermaster'd victor.**—The Syracusan conqueror overpowered and made captive by the charms of the 'tragic hymns' sung by the Athenian captives.

7. **Idle scimitar.**—The sword not drawn in battle for the purpose of slaying, but drawn now to sever the captives' chains.

[A scimitar is a curved sword used by the Turks. The word is not very appropriately used here.]

9. **His strains.**—The bard's strains to which the Athenian captives owed their freedom.

XVII.

1. **Stronger claim.**—Venice might well claim the gratitude of Europe for the services she rendered. These services are her strongest claims to freedom, but even if they did not exist, for other reasons, she should be restored to independence.

3. **Thy choral memory.....**—The memory of the Bard divine, that is, Tasso, preserved in the songs he wrote, which are still sung by the Venetians.

4. **Should have cut.**—Should have obtained for Venice deliverance from the yoke of Austria.

[The plea for freedom put forward by the poet on behalf of Venice seems very childish. Venice ought to be restored to freedom on account of the love felt for Tasso,—that love, too, not felt by the Austrians but by the Venetians !]

6. **Shameful to the nations**—It was a disgrace to the nations of Europe,—to England, Prussia and Russia,—when they agreed in 1815 to assign Venice to Austria.

7. **Albion, to thee.**—England shares more largely than any other country in this disgrace.

The Ocean queen.—England is now queen of the ocean and mistress of the seas as Venice once was. She should, therefore, have sympathised with Venice and saved her from the fate to which she was consigned.

9. **Think of thine.**—The poet bids England beware, lest the same fate should overtake her as overtook Venice.

Thy watery wall.—The sea that encircles England like a rampart, and protects her from foreign invasion. In spite of the protection the sea affords, England, the poet thinks, may yet fall a prey to some conquering nation.

XVIII

8. **Water-columns.**—Water spouts. “Tall columns, apparently of cloud, and reaching from the sea to the clouds are seen moving along, often several at once, sometimes straight and vertical, at other times inclined, but always in rapid rotation. At their bases, the sea is violently agitated and heaped up with a leaping or boiling motion, water, at least in some cases being actually carried up in considerable quantity.”—Sir J. HERSCHEL. These columns, extending from the sea to the clouds, assume a magnificent appearance, being of a light colour near their axis, but dark along their sides.

4. Venice was for a time the abiding place of pleasure and enjoyment and an emporium enriched by extensive commerce.

5. **Otway.**—An English writer of tragedy: born 1651, died 1685. His fame chiefly rests upon the *Orphan and Venice Preserved*.

Radcliffe.—Mrs. Radcliffe, a novelist, was born in 1764 and died in 1828. Her masterpiece is considered to be the *Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Schiller.—One of the greatest of German poets, was born in 1759 and died in 1805.

6. **Had stamped.....**—The description given of Venice in the works of all these authors had deeply impressed upon his mind an image or picture of what she was in the days of her glory.

7. **I found her thus.**—Although I found her in a state different from what I had imagined her to be.

The fact that Venice, when he saw her, was different from what he had pictured her to be, did not make him forsake her. On the contrary, she was dearer to him in her tribulation than she was or she would have been in the days of her prosperity.

XIX

1. **I can.....**—I can, with the help of memory, repeople Venice with those who once lived within her walls. I can imagine them to be alive and treading once more the streets of the city. I can thus live, as it were, in the past.

2-3. And as regards the present there is still a great deal in what I see to interest me and to furnish food for thought and quiet, subdued reflection.

6. **The web of my existence.**—The life of a man is compared to a piece of woven cloth into the texture of which many threads enter, some dark or sombre, others bright and rosy or golden in colour. The incidents, the experiences that go to make up a man's life, some happy, some unhappy, are like these threads.

7. **Have their colours caught.**—The poet has owed some of the happiest moments of his life to Venice. The web of his existence has been brightened by the joys he has experienced in Venice.

8-9. There are some feelings, the poet says, which cannot be crushed or deadened by the most painful experiences of life. He has endured torture or agony of mind: he has met with bitter disappointment and has been cruelly treated, but yet there are some feelings within him which cannot be subdued. His pride still remains unsubdued: he can still love and appreciate what is grand and beautiful: he can still sympathise with fallen greatness.

XX

1. **The tannen.**—"Tannen is the plural of *tanne*, a species of fir peculiar to the Alps, which only thrives in very rocky parts, where scarcely soil sufficient for its nourishment can be found. On these spots it grows to a greater height than any other mountain-tree."

4. **Alpine shocks.**—The rude assaults to which they are exposed on the mountains.

5. **Eddying storms.**—Strong, tempestuous whirl-winds.

9. **The mind.....**—There are some men so constituted that, like the tannen which thrive all the better for the hard conditions under which they grow and defy the mountain storms, their minds become firmer and stronger by the trials to which they are exposed and rise triumphant over all the ills of life.

XXI

1. **Existence**.—It is possible to endure life, even when one's life is unhappy.

The deep root.—Life is ordinarily fed and nourished by the hopes and joys and happy feelings that are implanted in the heart. But just as there are trees like the tanne which, springing from blocks of granite, grow to a great height massive and strong although their roots go deep down into a barren soil, so may life sometimes grow vigorous and strong though springing from a heart, joyless and unhappy. *Op. St. xxxiv, Canto III*:

"There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches ;"
* * * * *

2. **Sufferance**.—Suffering, the patient endurance of pain and misery.

9. **May temper it to bear**.—*It* seems to stand here for *existence*. May temper existence to be borne, that is to say, may so harden it as to make it bearable or endurable.

Temper.—As used here, the word means to harden, to bring to a proper degree of hardness, as to temper steel.

It is but for a day.—Man's life is only a span. There is no reason why he should not during the short period of his existence, endure his sufferings bravely, without a murmur of complaint.

XXII

1. **All suffering**.—Weak natures are unable to endure suffering and may be completely overcome by it: strong natures on the other hand may subdue and rise triumphant over it. The weak succumb, the strong conquer.

2. **In each event**.—In either case, the result is the same: there is an end to the suffering.

3. **Some, with hope**.—There are some men of a buoyant, hopeful nature, whose spirits are elastic. Nothing can repress them. Disappointed in their hopes, failing in the plans and purposes of their lives, they can yet recover from defeat and resume the struggle, still hoping, still striving for the same ends.

5. **Their web**.—The plan and purpose of their lives.

7. **The reed...leant**.—The weak or frail support on which they relied. The phrase 'a broken reed,' meaning a frail support, something on which we placed our hopes, but which fails us in the hour of need, is borrowed from the Bible. 'Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt: whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it.'—*Isaiah, xxxvi, 6*.

XXIII

1. **Ever and anon.**—Frequently, continually. *Anon*, literally *in one* moment, from H. S. *An* (in) and *on* (one.)

2. **A token.**—A remainder, something that awakes remembrance.

[We subdue our griefs : we succeed for a while in forgetting them, but often something occurs to awaken remembrance of them, giving us, like a scorpion's sting, sudden and acute pain.]

4. **Withal.**—The word as used here has much the same force as *too* or *also*.

5. **The weight.**—The burden of sorrow which the heart has to bear and which for a while it may cast off.

9. **The electric chain.**—An electric chain or wire is coiled, as it were, round every man. Something happens and the electric current conveyed by this chain, strikes into his very heart, gives him a sudden shock. Man is peculiarly susceptible to influences around him. Some circumstance, some incident, trivial in itself, may in a moment, like a flash of lightning, strike him to the heart inflicting deep pain.

Darkly.—Mysteriously, in a manner which we cannot comprehend, or, perhaps, it may mean 'in the darkness of misery.'

XXIV

1. The metaphor is kept up. The cloud is the slight thing, the trivial incident, that awakening painful recollections, inflicts a deep pang in the mind. The lightning flashing from a cloud blasts and destroys what it strikes : so, also, influence proceeding from some slight cause, may powerfully affect the heart, withering up for ever its hopes and joys.

2. **This lightning.**—This lightning effect, this sudden shock to the mind.

5. **Which.**—There is some confusion in the thought here. What the antecedent of *which* is, is not very clear.

Things familiar.—Such as are mentioned in lines 7 and 8 of the preceding stanza.

6. **We deem of such.**—Loosely and, perhaps, too, incorrectly expressed. When we least imagine, when we have no idea that these things can affect us.

7. **The spectres.**—The ghosts of other days ; faces and forms of those we once knew but now dead to us.

Exorcism.—The casting or driving out of evil spirit by conjuration, and the form of ceremony used for this purpose. It may be objected that exorcism does not *bind*, that is, confine, restrain or make fast, but etymologically the word is correctly enough used here, as to *exorcise*, according to its derivation, means to 'bind by an oath.'

9. **Too many yet how few!**—These whom we have loved are few indeed, but of these how many we have lost! The number of friends that one can boast of is very few, and of these few, one loses more than he can spare.

XXV

He has been moralizing all this while and wandering from his subject. He now returns from his digression, to pursue his subject, which is a description of the places visited by him in Italy.

3. **A ruin.....**An image of himself which Byron delighted in,—a man who has made shipwreck of his life, whose hopes and happiness have been blasted for ever.

4. **A land.**—Italy.

5. **In its old command.**—In the wide sway which it once exercised : in the sovereign power which it once wielded.

7. **The master-mould.**—*A mould* is the matrix or cavity in which anything is shaped and from which it takes its form, and a *master-mould* is a mould of supreme excellence. Italy is nature's choicest production or handiwork. Her people in ancient days were shaped and fashioned by nature to be brave and beautiful and of heroic character.

XXVI

1. **The commonwealth of kings.**—Rome was a republic, but in those brave days of old, the men who composed the republic or body politic were kings in their greatness and dignity and in the power they exercised.

[The ambassador of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, is said to have described the Roman Senate to his master as a Council of Kings.]

4. Italy has not only been blessed by Nature, being one of the most beautiful countries in the world, but she is the land of fine-Art, the land of the painter and the sculptor whose masterpieces are still to be seen in her cities, in museums and galleries.

8. **Thy wreck a glory.**—Italy is now in a ruined state but her very ruins testify to her former greatness and are a source of pride.

9. **Immaculate charm.**—A beauty perfect in its purity. *Immaculate* literally means without spot or stain, from Lat. *maculare* to spot.

XXVII

4. **Friuli's mountains.**—Friuli is a district at the head of the Adriatic, forming part of Italy and Austria. The mountains referred to are the Julian Alps.

6. **Iris of the West.**—In classical mythology, Iris is the goddess of the rainbow. The name is applied also to the rainbow, or to an appearance resembling the rainbow. The reference here is to

the halo or luminous circle of various colours seen sometimes round the sun or moon, and supposed to be caused by the refraction of light through crystals of ice in the atmosphere.

7. **Where the Day.**—In the west at evening, the departing day joins other days that have passed away from the world into eternity.

8. **On the other hand.**—On the other side opposite to the setting sun, that is to say, in the East.

Meek Dian's crest.—The crescent moon, mild and subdued in its appearance. Dian or Diana, in classical mythology, was the goddess of the moon.

[On one side we see the sun setting, encircled with a halo of light; on the other the moon rising with a mild and mellowed light. One half the sky is illumined by the sun; the other by the moon, and so 'sunset divides the sky with her.]

9. **Azure air.**—The blue sky, *azur*, (Old French *azur*) meaning the colour blue is a corrupted form standing for *lazur*, which was mistaken for *l'azur*, as if the initial *l* indicated the definite article. *Lazur* is the blue coloured stone called *lapis lazuli*, which is said to have derived its name from the mines of Lajward, where the stone was found.

Island of the blest.—In Grecian mythology, the Islands of the Blest or the Happy Islands, were certain islands in the Atlantic Ocean to which the souls of the righteous departed after death, there to enjoy eternal bliss. Byron compares the moon floating in the sky to one of these Happy Islands.

[The following is Byron's note on this stanza:—"The above description may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or an Italian sky, yet it is but a literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening, as contemplated in one of many rides along the banks of the Brenta, near La Mira."]

XXVIII

3. **Yon sunny sea.**—'The sea of glory' referred to in the previous stanza as streaming along the Alpine height.

4. **Rhætian hill.**—The Rhætian Alps are the most easterly of the Central Alps.

5. **As.**—As if.

6. **Nature reclaim'd.....**—Nature reasserted herself, as it were, and enforced the observance of the order she intended. It is Nature's law or order that when the Day is over, it must give place to Night. The limits of each and the order of succession are fixed by Nature.

7. **The deep-dyed Brenta.**—The waters of the Brenta richly coloured and made purple with the hues of the sky. The Brenta is a river on the north of Italy which flows into the Adriatic.

Their hues.—The hues of day and night as seen in the sky.

Instil.—Infuse or impart; literally pour in drop by drop. From L. *in* and *stillare*, to drop, *stilla*, a drop.

8. **The odorous**.....—The bright purple colour of a fragrant rose, newly blown or opened. It is the rose that is odorous, but the epithet is transferred to the colour.

9. The antecedent of *which* is *purple*. This purple colour which day and night combined impart to the stream, flows along with the water and shines bright within it. *Glassed* may be taken to mean either encased or enclosed, as it were, in glass, or reflected as in a glass.

XXIX

1. **Filled with.....heaven.**—Reflecting the glory of the sky. These words are grammatically connected with 'the deep-dyed Brenta gently flows' in the previous stanza.

2-3.—These lines repeat what has already been said. The brilliant hues of the sky are poured out on the waters.

5. **A paler shadow**.....—As the day departs, the glory gradually fades away.

7. **The Dolphin**—The true dolphin is a sea animal measuring from 6 .. 16 .. length, but the name is commonly and improperly given to a fish of the mackerel family, the beauty of whose changing colours when dying has been much celebrated by poets. It is to this fish, known also as the *dorado*, that Byron refers.

XXX

1. **Arqua.**—A village of Northern Italy about 13 miles south-west of Padua, where the poet Petrarch died.

2. **Pillared**.....—The coffin containing the bones of Petrarch is supported on four pillars. Not buried in a grave, as coffins usually are, it is raised above the ground.

Sarcophagus.—A stone-coffin or tomb. The word comes from the Greek and literally means *flesh-eater*. It was originally applied to a species of limestone used among the Greeks for making coffins, which was so called because it consumed within a few weeks the flesh of bodies deposited within it.

3. **Laura's lover.**—The great Italian poet Petrarch, who was born at Arezzo in 1304 and died at Arqua in 1374.

[The following quotation from Blackie's Modern Cyclopaedia explains the allusion:—'It was at Avignon in 1327 that he first saw,

In the church of St. Clair, the Laura who exercised so great an influence on his life and lyrics. Our information regarding this lady is exceedingly meagre, but it is supposed that her name was Laura de Noves, that she had become the wife of Hugo de Sade two years before she was seen by Petrarch, and that she died in 1348 a virtuous wife and mother of a large family. After the first meeting Petrarch remained at Avignon three years, singing his purely Platonic love and haunting Laura at church and in her walks.
 * * * * * In 1387 he returned to Avignon, bought a small estate at Vanchise in order to be near Laura and here for three years wrote numerous sonnets in her praise.]

4. **His well-sung woes.**—His famous sonnets to Laura in which he pours out his feelings.

5. **The pilgrimsgenius.**—Travellers from afar attracted to Arqua by his genius. They come in a spirit of reverence to do homage to his genius like pilgrims who travel to holy places to worship at the shrine of some saint.

6. **To raise a language.**—Petrarch did much to improve and elevate the Italian language.

And his land reclaim.—Petrarch was an ardent patriot and in some of his poems tried to inspire a love of Freedom, but he had little practical influence on the political life of his time. His ideas were those of a poet, and not of a statesman. Byron is apparently referring to some of his lyrics addressed to Colonna and to Rienzi, and more particularly, perhaps to the famous address to his country (*Italia Mia*) in which he reproaches the Italian princes for their dissensions, and for calling to their aid the mercenary barbarians who were the scourge of Italy.

7. **Dull yoke.**—Oppression which numbs and deadens the minds of the oppressed.

8. **Watering the tree.....**The tree referred to is the laurel, his lady's name, Laura, meaning a laurel. The laurel being emblematic of fame and honour and distinction, Petrarch, as an aspirant to fame, is poetically described as watering the tree with his melodious tears. It was by his sonnets to Laura, by his 'well-sung woes,' that he won his way to fame and glory as a poet. The most glorious moment of Petrarch's honoured career was, when invited by the Senate of Rome on Easter Sunday, 1341, he ascended the Capitol clad in the robes of his friend and ardent admirer, Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, and there, after delivering an oration on poetry and the significance of the laurel, was crowned Poet Laureate amid the acclamations of thousands.

XXXI

3. **Went downyears.**—Where he lived in the declining years of his life, when he was growing old.

8. **A feeling**.....—The simplicity of Petrarch's house and tomb is such as to inspire the stranger who visits the place with feelings that are in accord or harmony with the noble simplicity of his verse.

[There is some confusion in the thought here. It is not the feeling that is 'more accordant with his strain', but the mansion and the sepulchre. What Byron apparently meant was that standing before the mansion and the sepulchre, simple and yet venerable, a stranger cannot help feeling that they are more in keeping with the noble simplicity of Petrarch's verse than any grand and stately monument would have been.]

9. **A pyramid**.—The pyramids of Egypt were royal sepulchres, built by the kings of the early dynasties of the Kingdom of Egypt as their tombs. By a pyramid, Byron means some colossal structure, a mountain of masonry, erected as a tomb. Milton in his Epitaph on Shakespeare asks :—

" What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in piled stones ?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be laid
Under a star-y pointing pyramid ?

Monumental fane—A temple or mausoleum erected in memory and in honour of some dead person.

XXXII

2. **That.....which**.—Better 'Such...as.'

Complexion.—Character or nature.

3. **Who.....felt**.—Who have realized that life is mortal. Who have felt that human life, whatever its wealth and glory, must end in death. 'Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity.' Men realise the truth of this when they grow old, and ceasing to care for the things they sought after in towns and cities, in the busy scenes of life, long for repose in some quiet, secluded place, far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.

5. **Umbrage**,—As this word means *shade*, the expression 'umbrage of a.....shade,' may be objected to as tautology. *Umbrage* means also *offence*.

7. **Now**.—In old age, when we have felt our mortality.

8. **For they.....** Busy cities have no attraction for men who feel they are nearing death.

9. **Can make sufficient holiday**.—Can give sufficient pleasure. A 'soft quiet hamlet' may not have those interests, those excitements, those attractions that busy cities have, but it can yet afford a quiet pleasure of its own.

XXXIII

1. **Developing**.....Unfolding and displaying the grandeur of the mountains and the beauty of the leaves and flowers.

3. **Sauntering hours**.—The hours passed leisurely and lazily.

5. **Idleness it seem**.—A life of the kind pictured, spent in no active work, in sitting or reclining on the banks of a stream and drinking in the beauty of the scenery, may seem a life of idleness.

Its morality.—Its moral lesson. Such a life of quiet seclusion teaches us how to die.

6 **From society**.—Living with other men in society, we learn how to conduct ourselves in our relations with them.

8. **It hath**.....In a life of solitude there is no one to flatter us. We are left to ourselves.

Vanity can give.....As there is no one to flatter us in solitude, we are free from that empty pride, that over-weening conceit, which is of so little real help and support in life.

9 **Man**.....In solitude, man is brought face to face with his God and into closer relationship with Him. As there is nothing now to divert his attention, all his thoughts turn to God with whom he seeks to make his peace.

XXXIV

1. **With demons**.—With evil thoughts and passions. “The struggle”, says Byron in a note, “is as likely to be with demons as with our better thoughts.”

2. **Seek their prey**.....These evil thoughts and passions prey upon and torture the minds of those who are naturally of a melancholy disposition.

4. **Of moody texture**.—Of a sad, morose and gloomy disposition.

6. **Deeming**.....—Believing that they were foredoomed to a life of unhappiness and that it would be useless for them to struggle against their destiny.

7. **Which is not**.....—Pain and misery, not short-lived, but of an abiding nature, lasting all through life.

8. **Making the sun**.....Apparently an echo of a Bible verse,—“The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood.” *Joel, II. 31.*

The language here is very hyperbolical. To one who is of a morbidly melancholy disposition, who imagines that God has destined him to be unhappy and who gives himself up to despair, the world is a joyless world. Neither in this life nor in the life to

come can he see anything to comfort him. Everything is dark and gloomy. Byron, we may take it, is describing in these lines the state of his feelings, his own morbid mind, though, perhaps, in extravagant language.

9. **Hell itself.**—Hell is always painted in dark colours, but to the morbid mind, it is even darker than it is usually supposed to be. The horrors imagined are of the most dreadful description, far exceeding those an ordinarily healthy mind can conceive.

XXXV

1. **Ferrara.**—A town in the north of Italy, capital of the province of the same name. It is a well-built town with many remains of the splendour and commercial prosperity it enjoyed under the house of Este. Under the Papal rule it fell into decay and has now a deserted appearance. The province was formerly a Duchy of Italy held by the house of Este as a papal fief from 1471 till 1597, when it fell to the Pope.

2. **Whose symmetry**.....The regular manner in which the streets are laid out shows that it was never intended to be a place of solitude.

4. **Antique brood.**—Ancient house or family. The expression is utterly inappropriate.

5. **Este**.....One of the most ancient and illustrious families of Italy. The sovereigns of Ferrara and Modena were of this family, several of them being famous as patrons of letters.

6. **Of yore.**—In former days. *Yore* is from Anglo-Saxon *gearn*, literally meaning 'of or during years,' the genitive plural of *geár*, a year.

8-9. Those who followed Dante as the poets of Italy—Tasso, Ariosto, Guarini. Dante, the greatest of all Italian poets, was born in Florence in 1265. His most famous work is the *Divina Commedia*.

XXXVI

1. **Tasso**—See note, stanza III. l. 1.

2. They listened to the noble lines of Tasso, and yet they consigned him to a cell!

Torquato.—This was Tasso's Christian name.

3. **Alphonso.**—Alphonso II, Duke of Ferrara.

5—8. Tasso was at first patronised by the Duke, but he became a prey to morbid fancies, and his conduct became so outrageous that he was seized by the Duke's orders and confined as a madman in the hospital of St. Anne at Ferrara. Byron is not just to the Duke in his description of him as a 'miserable despot,' and of his treatment of Tasso.

7. **The hell.....**Byron imagines that Tasso was confined along with maniacs in a lunatic asylum, described as hell on account of the cruel and barbarous fashion in which the insane were treated in former days.

8-9. **Glory without end.....**Tasso's immortal fame has dispelled the shame and ignominy he endured.

XXXVII

1. **Thine.**—Thy name,—Alphonso's. As Alphonso has not been addressed already, having been referred to in the previous stanza in the third person, the use of *thine* here is open to objection.

2-4. Alphonso 'dead and turned to clay,' his worthless dust has mingled with the dust of others belonging to his proud lineage or family, and is now utterly valueless. Their dust gathered in a heap (perhaps, in the family vault) is compared to the filthy water and refuse gathered in a sink, that is, a drain or cess-pool.

4. **But**—If it were not that.

The link.—A man's life is like a chain made up of several links. As each link serves to connect the links that come before and those that come after, so each separate incident in a man's life connects what precedes with what follows. Here Alphonso's dealings or relations with Tasso, influencing the fortunes of the latter, form one period or portion of Tasso's life, or, to change the metaphor, they form one chapter in the book of his life.

7. **Ducal pageants.**—His display of pomp and grandeur as Duke of Ferrara.

Shrink from thee.—Have shrivelled up and departed. Have, as it were, recoiled from him in horror and disgust.

8. **If in another station.**—If instead of being of royal, he had been of humble birth.

XXXVIII

In this stanza Byron draws a contrast between Alphonso and Tasso, between the fate of the former and the fate of the latter. The language is vigorous, but it is somewhat coarse and undignified in its application to Alphonso.

2. **Even as the beasts.**—Borrowed from the Bible. See *Ps. xlix*, 14. Byron describes Alphonso as one devoid of all merit, whose perfectly useless life, summed up in the words he ate, drank, slept, and died, was no better than that of the beasts of the field.

3. The only difference between Alphonso and the beasts of the field was that he lived in a palace and fared more sumptuously. A *sty* is an enclosure for swine and a *trough* is a box out of which swine eat and drink.

4. Furrowed brow.—Marked with lines either of deep thought or of care and sorrow.

6. The Cruscan quire.—‘The reference is to the Academy Della Crusca, a celebrated literary association in Florence, Italy, founded for the purpose of purifying and refining the Italian language and style. The name literally means the Academy of the Sieve or the Academy of Chaff, the object of the Association being to sift the chaff from the wheat, the bad from the good, in the Italian language and literature. Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* was condemned by the Academy.

[The name of Della Crusca is probably better known to English readers as a designation applied to a class of sentimental writers in England distinguished by their affected style of expression.]

Quire.—An old and obsolete spelling of the word *choir*, meaning a band of singers. The term is here used for the Academy.

7. Boileau.—A distinguished French poet and critic. Born in 1636, died in 1711. His influence in literature, which was very great in France, extended to England where his literary creed was imitated by Pope in his *Essay on Criticism*. Boileau is said to have been of a jealous, envious and arrogant disposition.

Could allow.—Boileau's envious nature, according to Byron, prevented him from appreciating the poetry of other countries which surpassed that of his own. Boileau appears to have written disparagingly of Tasso's poetry.

Allow.—From the old French *alouer* used in two senses, (1) to praise, commend (L. *allaudare*, *al*, *ud* to, and *laudare*, praise). (2) to bestow, assign, (L. *allocare* *al*, *ad*, and *locare*, to place). When the word was adopted in English, the two primary significations gave rise to a variety of uses which were all blended in the general idea of *assign with approval*.

8. Creaking.—Making a harsh, grating sound.

9. That whetstone.....—Something that sets the teeth on edge, that irritates or causes an acutely disagreeable sensation.

Monotony in wire.—Monotony drawn or spun out to great length.

[It is not easy to understand the exact significance of Byron's contemptuous criticism of French poetry. There may be a reference to the monotony of the heroic metric adopted by French poets. Boileau's influence, it is said, was both beneficial and hurtful to French letters. “In more than a hundred years while his authority was at its height, there was a distinct falling off in poetry. Verse was robbed of fire and melody and the power of vague suggestion.”]

XXXIX

1. **Shade.**—Departed spirit.

His.—His fate.

3. **Poisoned arrows.**—Shafts of slander and calumny.

But to miss.—All the efforts that have unjustly been made to injure Tasso and detract from his reputation have proved futile. His glory shines undimmed.

9. **Condensed.**—The concentrated brilliance of the minds of millions of men who are born into this world in successive generations could not equal the brilliance of Tasso's mind. He is like the sun whose glorious light far surpasses that of all the stars put together.

XL

1. **Paralleled by those**—The only poets who can be compared with Tasso are those two countrymen of his who preceded him in Italy, Dante and Ariosto.

3. **Bards of Hell and Chivalry.**—The Bard of Hell is Dante. His great poem, the 'Divina Commedia' (Divine Comedy) is divided into three parts, entitled Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. In the first of these, the poet describes his journey through hell and the sights he there witnessed.

The Bard of Chivalry is Ariosto, one of the most celebrated poets of Italy, born in 1474, died in 1533. His great poem the *Orlando Furioso*, details the adventures of the paladins of the age of Charlemagne.

4. **The Tuscan father.**—Dante who was born in Florence in that part of Italy which was known as Tuscany. In the next line, Dante is again referred to as the Florentine.

6. **The Southern Scott.**—Sir Walter Scott was in the North of Europe, what Ariosto was in the South,—the Bard of Chivalry.

7. **A new creation.**—A new world of ideal beings, such as the world never saw.

His magic line.—His wonderful tales in verse like those which Scott poured out, and which earned for the latter the name of the Wizard of the North.

8. **The Ariosto of the North.**—Scott is often known by this name bestowed on him by Byron,

9. **Sang... ...**—Sang in his poems of the days of chivalry, of Knights and their lady-loves, of war and adventure and doughty deeds.

XLII

1. **The lightning**.....—Byron's note explains this. “Before the remains of Ariosto were removed from the Benedictine church to the library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning, and a crown of iron laurels melted away.”

2. **The iron crown**—The wreath of iron leaves made in imitation of laurel leaves.

3. **The ominous element**.—Lightning, which is regarded with fear and awe by superstitious people who see, in the destruction it causes, a manifestation of divine wrath.

4.5. The halo or true wreath of glory which encircles the brow of a great man like Tasso is something which is not material and which cannot therefore be destroyed by lightning.

[It appears to have been a superstitious belief in ancient times that the laurel was antagonistic to the stroke of lightning and was a protection against it. The Emperor Tiberius, we are told, never failed to wear a wreath of laurel when the sky threatened a thunder-storm.]

6. **The false semblance**.—The counterfeit appearance, that is to say, the iron crown made in imitation of a laurel wreath.

7. **If fondly**.....—If superstitious persons are made unhappy by this incident, let me tell them this for their comfort.

Fondly.—Two ideas are blended in the word,—affectionately and foolishly.

8. **Lightning sanctifies**.—Another old belief, “Bodies scathed and persons struck dead by lightning were said to be incorruptible: and anyone so distinguished was held by the ancients in great honour.” In this way, the lightning sanctifies or makes sacred whatever it strikes below. To comfort and reassure the superstitious, Byron turns what might seem an omen of evil into an omen of good.

XLII

This and the following stanza are said to be, with the exception of a line or two, a translation of a famous sonnet by an Italian poet Filicaja—“Italia, Italia, O tu cui feo la sorte!”

2. **The fatal gift of beauty**.—The beauty of a country attracts invaders and proves its ruin.

3. **A funeral dower**.... —A dower or dowry is a bride's portion on her marriage, that which a woman brings to her husband in marriage. It is associated therefore with joy and happiness. In the case of Italy, the beauty with which she was dowered by Nature, instead of proving a source of happiness to her, became the cause of all her woes. Instead of a *marriage* portion, it was a *funeral* portion.

4. Deep furrows or lines of sorrow have been imprinted on the beautiful face of Italy by the shameful treatment she has received at the hands of her enemies. Traces of all that she has suffered, of all the humiliation she has undergone, are clearly to be seen.

5. The history of Italy is written, as it were, in deeply carved letters of fire on the face of the country, for all to read. Towns pillaged and burnt, once populous cities now deserted, fields laid waste, are all unmistakable evidences of what the country has suffered.

XLIII

1. **Then.**—If Italy had been ‘more powerful’

Less desired.—If thou hadst been less attractive, and therefore less coveted.

2. **Undeplored.**—Without being pitied and sorrowed over as thou art now.

3. **Destructive charms.**—The fatal gift of beauty.

Untired.—The participle refers to ‘armed torrents’ in the next line.

6. **Many-nationed.**—Consisting of or belonging to many nations,—Gauls, Goths, Vandals, Germans, Austrians, French.

7. **Quaff blood and water**—Drink of the waters of the Po, running red with the blood of the slain.

XLIV

1. **In youth.**—Eight years earlier, in 1809 when Byron first left England on his travels accompanied by Mr. Hobhouse. Byron was then 21 years old.

I traced.—I travelled the same way: I followed the same course.

2. **The Roman friend.**—Servius Sulpicius.

Least-mortal mind.—A mind which, of all Roman minds, made the nearest approach in its intellectual powers to divine excellence.

3. **Rome's least-mortal mind.**—Marcus Tullius Cicero, referred to in the next line as Tully, the greatest of all Roman orators and one of the most admired of ancient writers. Born 106 B. C., died B. C. 43.

6. **Piræus.**—The principal port of both ancient and modern Athens. When Byron saw it, it was merely a scene of ruins, but since the liberation of Greece from Turkish rule, it has grown into a large and flourishing town.

9. **He.**—Servius Sulpicius.

XLV

5. **The crush'd relics**.....The ruins of these ancient cities that bear witness to the power and greatness which once belonged to them.

8. **His yetpage**.—The reference is to a letter written to Cicero by Servius Sulpicius, a letter still extant.

[The celebrated letter of Servius Sulpicius to Cicero, on the death of his daughter, described as it then was, and now is, a path which I often traced in Greece, by sea and land, in different journeys and voyages—BYRON. The following passage from the letter is what Byron refers to:—“On my return from Asia, as I was sailing from *Ægina* towards Megara, I began to contemplate the prospect of the countries around me; *Ægina* was behind, Megara before me; Piræus on the right, Corinth on the left; all which towns, once famous and flourishing, now lie overturned and buried in their ruins. Upon this sight, I could not but think presently within myself, Alas! how do we poor mortals fret and vex ourselves, if any of our friends happen to die or be killed, whose life is yet so short, when the carcasses of so many noble cities lie here exposed before me in one view.”]

9. **The moral lesson**.—That we ought not to mourn, as we do, over the death of our friends, seeing that the noblest cities in the world have been ruined and destroyed.

9. **Pilgrimage**.—Travels, wanderings.

XLVI

1. **That page**.—The letter of Servius Sulpicius.

Mine.—My page. The poem he was writing.

2. **His country's ruin**.—The ruin of Italy.

3. **In their decline**.—The States that Servius Sulpicius mourned over were Grecian States that were then in their *decline*, or in a decadent condition. In addition to these States, which Byron now mourns over in their utter desolation, he mourns over the ruins of another State, that is Italy.

4. **All that was**.....All that belonged to the past, that once existed and flourished, is now in a state of ruins.

5. **Of then destruction**.—There are two possible constructions. *Then* may be taken as a noun equivalent to ‘former times,’ or as an adjective qualifying destruction, and equivalent to ‘of former times.’ The former seems preferable. All that was of *then* (former times) is now destruction, that is, in a state of destruction.

6. **Bows her**Bends her head in submission to her fate, overwhelmed by the storm of destruction that has swept over her.

8. Titanic.—Huge, gigantic.

[The Titans were a race of giants in classical mythology who made war against the Gods.]

9. Wrecks of... The ruins of Italy are like the skeleton, the mere dry bones, the fossil remains of some huge creature of prehistoric times belonging to some past geological period, when the world was very different from what it is now. The skeleton gives some idea of the enormous size of the animal, and in the same way the gigantic ruins that are scattered over Italy are an indication of the power and greatness of Imperial Rome.

XLVII

Mother of Arts.—Italy is the land of the fine arts—Music, Painting, Sculpture.

Thy handguardian. Britain, as a Roman province, was once under the government and protection of Rome.

4. Still our guide.—The civil law of England, as of many other countries in Europe, is based very largely on the ancient Roman law. In this way Rome is 'still our guide'

5. Parent of our religion.—This is not strictly correct as Christianity did not take its rise in Rome. But missionaries from Rome converted the Saxons and helped to establish Christianity in England. From Rome, England derived her Christianity: to Rome she owes her religion.

6. For the keys of heaven.—For admission into heaven. [The Pope at Rome was for centuries recognised by the whole Christian world, and is still recognised by the greater portion of it, as head of the Christian Church. He claims to be a successor of the Apostle St. Peter to whom the keys of Heaven were given, the power or privilege, that is, of absolving men from their sins and granting them admission into Heaven. Roman Catholics, who believe that the Pope exercises this power as St. Peter's successor, have the profoundest veneration for him.]

8 & 9. The prediction has been fulfilled. The various States and provinces into which Italy was split up, have all been united, and Italy is now one independent kingdom.

XLVIII

1. Wins us.—Attracts us.

2. The Etrurian Athens.—Florence, which to Italy was what Athens was to Greece, 'the mother of arts and eloquence.' Etruria was the name anciently given to that part of Italy which corresponds to modern Tuscany,

3. A softer feeling—Softer, that is, than the feeling rugged. Athens awakens, or perhaps, softer than the feeling of indignation kindled in the heart by the wrongs that Italy has suffered.

Fairy halls.—Florence can boast of many beautiful public buildings and churches, adorned architecturally, with great taste and delicacy, and containing specimens of painting and statuary by the greatest masters in those arts.

4. **Theatre of hills.**—The city is surrounded by hills and is beautifully situated on both banks of the Arno.

5. **Plenty leaps**—Very figurative language. Plenty (personified) rejoices and dances with delight in the bright sunshine of Florence. In plain language, Florence is made happy in the plenty she enjoys, in the abundance of her produce.

6. **Her redundant horn**—The cornucopia or horn of plenty, from which fruits and flowers are represented as issuing. It is an emblem of abundance.

Redundant.—From L. *red*, again or back and *unda*, a wave—overflowing, superabundant. Commerce enriches a country, and where wealth abounds, luxury prevails. Luxury there has always been, even in barbarous times, but the luxury of modern times is peculiarly the offspring of commerce.

9. **Buried Learning.**—Learning which had been neglected, which had been dead, as it were, for a long time, came to life again and entered upon a new period of ~~activity~~ [The reference is to what is known as the Renaissance or Revival of Learning in Europe, a name given to the great intellectual movement which marks the transition from the middle ages to the modern world. One side of the movement was the revived study in a new spirit of the classical languages and classical literature of Greece and Rome. Italy was specially the nursing mother of the Renaissance, and in its earlier period, Florence led the van.]

XLIX

The GoddessThe marble statue of Venus, the goddess of love.

[The reference here is to the Venus d' Medici. "A famous statue and one of the most perfect remains of ancient art. It is now in the tribune of the Uffizi Palace in Florence, and is supposed to be the work of the Greek sculptor Cleomenes who lived about 360 years before Christ. It is a figure of the goddess, of small but beautiful proportions, and is regarded as an example of perfect art in its class."]

2. **We inhale.**—We breathe in, or better, we drink in the divine beauty of the statue.

Ambrosial.—Of the nature of ambrosia, the food of the gods, and therefore, delicious or delightful to the taste or smell, but the word is often used, as here, in the sense of 'divinely excellent or beautiful.'

3-4. **Instills.**—Infuses into us a feeling of immortality: makes us almost feel that, standing in the presence of a divine being, we partake too of its divine nature.

4-5. **The veil.**—Heaven seems partly disclosed to our view. We imagine that we are in the presence of an inhabitant of Heaven.

5. **The pale.**—The iron railing that surrounds the pedestal of the statue.

7. The mind of a great genius is able to create what nature cannot. Nowhere in nature can we see such perfect beauty as the great sculptor imagined and embodied in stone.

8. **The fond idolaters.**—Those ancient Greeks who were foolish but devout worshippers of idols.

9. **The innate flash.**—A sudden and brilliant outburst or manifestation of genius,—inborn or natural, and not due to any external influence.

8-9. The construction is not clear in these two lines, and the thought is badly expressed.

L

2. **Drunk with beauty.**—With reference to his stay at Florence, Byron wrote: "I remained but a day: however I went to the two galleries, from which one returns *drunk with beauty*."

3. **Reels**—Turns giddy and staggers, as it were, like a drunken man, overcome by the sight of such intoxicating beauty.

4. **Chained**—In ancient days it was the custom in Rome when a victorious General returned from the wars, to accord him what was called a Triumph. He was allowed to enter the city in grand procession, in a chariot drawn by four horses, and captives were sometimes chained to the chariot. Art is here represented as a triumphant General, and we who own its sway and are captivated by it, are the captives chained to its chariot.

7. **The paltry jargon**—The technical language, conventional and unintelligible, which is made use of by dealers in statuary, in their descriptions of statues which they wish to sell.

8. **Pedantry gulls Folly.**—Fools allow themselves to be deceived into making purchases of statues, by persons who pretend to have a knowledge of statuary, and who make a pedantic display of their knowledge.

[It is not every one who can judge of a work of art, and people who have no true appreciation of works of art, such as paintings and statues, are very often taken in by dealers who pretend to talk learnedly.]

8 & 9. **We have eyes.....**—No learned description is required to make us appreciate the beauty of the Venus d' Medici. There is no need for one to be a connoisseur. Any one who has eyes to see, and a heart to feel, must admit it to be the very perfection of beauty. Standing before the statue, we gaze in admiration. Our hearts beat fast, our pulses throb and we cannot help feeling that Paris was right in giving the award of beauty to Venus.

The Dardan Shepherd's prize.—The reference is to the well-known story of the 'Judgment of Paris.' (See any Classical Dictionary and read Tennyson's *Ænone*.) The three chief goddesses Hera (Juno), Pallas (Minerva) and Aphrodite (Venus) having each claimed to be the fairest in Heaven, appeared before Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy, to whom was referred the decision of the question. Paris decided in favour of Aphrodite or Venus and awarded to her the prize of beauty a golden apple inscribed with the words 'to the fairest.' Dardan is another name for Trojan, Dardanus being the mythical ancestor of the Trojans, and Paris is called the Dardan *Shepherd* as he lived the life of a shepherd on Mount Ida.

LI

2. **Anchises.**—King of Dardanus on Mount Ida. He was beloved by Aphrodite or Venus, by whom he became the father of *Æneas*.

4. **Lord of War.**—Ares or Mars, the god of war, in classical mythology, who loved and was beloved by Venus.

8. **Lava kisses.**—Hot, burning, passionate kisses, poured out like lava from the mouth of a volcano.

9. **As from an urn.**—An *urn* is a vessel usually in the form of a vase, employed for different purposes, as for holding liquids, for ornamental uses, for holding the ashes of the dead. The particular *urn* meant here is apparently a tea *urn*, a vessel for supplying hot water for tea. Her kisses having been compared in the previous line to lava pouring out from a volcano, the description is made very feeble by comparing them now to the hot water that is poured out from an *urn*.

LII

1. **Circumfused.**—Poured or spread around. If the word is grammatically connected with 'gods' in line 4, it is hard to make out what the poet means by the gods being circumfused in speechless love. It may refer to 'divinity' in line 2, but this does not help us much.

2. **Their full divinity.**—Their nature perfect in its divinity and free from all taint of earth. Love is an earthly passion, born of the flesh and not of the spirit.

3. **That feeling.**—The feeling of love which the divine nature of the gods cannot sufficiently express.

4-5. Man's fate.....—To man also is given the passion of love and he like the gods has his blissful moments. He, too, like the gods finds his greatest happiness in the gratification of this passion.

5-6. The weight of earth.—In the ecstasies of love, men are lifted to heaven, as it were, but they are dragged down to earth again by the cares and troubles of life and the infirmities of human nature.

7. We can recall.—Byron is thinking perhaps, of his own experiences in affairs of the heart.

8. Things which grow.... His imagination, working on the recollection of the beautiful women he has known and loved, can create images of beauty in his mind not unlike the statue of Venus before him.

9. Gods.—Rather, goddesses.

LIII

2. His ape.—The imitator of the artist, the pretender to artistic knowledge, the charlatan artist.

In a letter to a friend, Byron writes:—"I know nothing of painting. Depend upon it, of all the arts, it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is most imposed upon. I never yet saw the picture or the statue which came a league within my conception or expectation."

3. Connoisseurship.—A connoisseur, (literally one who knows) is a critical judge of any art, especially of one of the fine arts. Just as we say 'his lordship,' speaking of a lord, so Byron referring to a connoisseur, speaks of him as his connoisseurship, only with mock respect or in a sarcastic manner.

5. Let these describe.—Connoisseurs profess to describe the beauty of a work of art, and to explain wherein the beauty lies. They point out the pose and attitude of a statue, its curves and lines of beauty, and the 'voluptuous swell' of the bosom, but it is impossible for them, pretend as they may, to describe beauty that is indescribable, beauty that can only be felt but not expressed in words.

6. I would not.—I do not wish.

Their vile breath.—The cant or jargon made use of by connoisseurs in their descriptions, so hateful or distasteful to the poet.

Crisp.—Ripple, cause to undulate. When the surface of water is ruffled or disturbed the reflected image in it is rendered indistinct and confused.

The stream.—His mind is compared to a stream. The statue is imaged in his mind, just as an object is reflected in a stream and

he does not want the clear vision he has of it to be blurred and made indistinct.

8. **The unruffled mirror.**—The mind or soul, compared at first to a stream, is now compared to a mirror.

Dream.—Vision of beauty—Here again the thought is obscurely expressed. The statue is imaged in his soul or mind as a star is mirrored in the smooth clear waters of a stream. The star shines from above, from its place in the sky; the vision of beauty comes down to him, as it were, from heaven, penetrating deep into his soul and filling it with ineffable delight.

LIV

1. **Santa Croce's.**—(Holy Cross). A famous Church of the Black Friars in Florence which Byron describes in one of his letters as containing "much illustrious nothing." As a favourite place of interment of the Florentines, it has often been styled the "Westminster Abbey" of the City. Dean Stanely calls it "the recognised shrine of Italian genius."

3—6. It is difficult to explain these lines, the meaning being so obscurely expressed in curious phraseology. They are utterly unintelligible. It will be noticed, too, that the rhymes in this stanza are most atrocious.

3. **An immortality.**—How this can be passes one's comprehension.

4. **The past.**—What or whose past is meant it is impossible to say.

5. **The particle.**....The minute remains, the ashes or dust of those sublime persons.

6. **Relapsed to chaos.**—Which have returned to the unorganized condition from which they came into existence.

Angelo.—Michael Angelo, a distinguished Italian painter, sculptor, architect and poet, a master, in fact, of all the fine arts, and a man of great genius, born 1475, died 1563.

Alfieri.—An Italian poet, born 1749, died 1808.

8. **Galileo.**—A famous Italian mathematician, physicist and astronomer. Born 1564, died 1642. The epithet 'starry' is applied to him because, as an astronomer, he studied the heavenly bodies and made many discoveries.

His woes.—Galileo having supported and expounded the Copernican system as against the Ptolemaic, was summoned before the tribunal of the Inquisition. He was condemned to renounce upon his knees the truths he had maintained and was sentenced to im-

prisonment. The last years of his life were embittered by domestic trouble and disease.

9. **Machiavelli.**—A distinguished Italian statesman and historian. Born 1469, died 1527. The work by which he is best known is called the 'Prince.' The name of Machiavelli is now synonymous with all that is tortuous and treacherous in state affairs.

LV

1. **The elements.**—The time-honoured "four elements" of the Greeks,—air, fire, water, earth. Just as the whole physical world was supposed to be made up of these four elements, the whole mental world could be fitted out and equipped with the vast intellectual wealth of these four great men.

6. **Spirits which soar.....**—Men whose lofty genius rises triumphant in spite of the decayed condition of their country. As a rule, genius is not displayed in ruined countries. Italy, however, is an exception. Men of genius are still to be found in Italy.

7. **Is impregnate.....**—Is made pregnant or fruitful with.

Divinity.—Divine genius.

8. **Which gilds it.....**—Which, like the quickening influence of the sun, brightens and reanimates Italy in her decay.

9. **Canova.**—An Italian sculptor, born 1757, died 1822. Byron points to him as an illustration of the truth of what he has said that Italy even in her decayed condition, can give birth to men of genius.

LVI

1. **The all.**—The all-glorious or the all in all, or, simply, perhaps, the three who were all Etruscans by birth.

3. **The Bard of Prose.**—The person referred to is Boccaccio, the great Italian novelist and poet, who was born in 1313 and died in 1375. He is regarded by his own countrymen as an incomparable master of Italian prose. He is described as the *bard* of Prose, because his romantic love stories display such rich poetic fancy and rich poetic sentiment.

Creative spirit.—One gifted with imagination, with great inventive powers displayed in his Tales.

4. **The Hundred Tales.**—The reference is to the *Decameron*, a work which consists of a hundred tales represented to have been related in equal portions in ten days by a party of ladies and gentlemen at a country house near Florence, while the plague was raging in that city. Boccaccio's fame rests chiefly on this work.

6. **In death.**—Their bones would be distinguished from our common clay in death, if they were buried in finer tombs as they deserved, but this is not the case.

7. **Their country's marbles.**—Italy is the land of marble and of marble statues, but, strange to say, no marble statues or marble tombs of these three great men are to be seen in Italy. This may have been true in Byron's time: it is not true now.

9. **Did they not.**—Were not these men, the sons of Florence, buried in Florence in their own native soil?

LVII

1. **Dante sleeps afar.**—Dante was buried at Ravenna on the shores of the Adriatic and there he still lies.

2. **Like Scipio.**—Scipio Africanus, the Elder, one of the most illustrious of Roman soldiers, and the conqueror of Hannibal. Charges were brought against him by a party in the State hostile to him, and disgusted with the ingratitude of the Romans, without deigning to reply, he retired to his villa at Liternum, where he died in B. C. 183. The following inscription was placed on his tomb:—

“Ingrata patria, cineres meos non habebis!”

Upbraiding shore.—The sea, on whose shores Dante is buried, is represented as upbraiding or reproaching his countrymen for their ingratitude.

3. **Thy factions.**—Florence was torn asunder by two rival factions known as the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. Dante belonged to the Guelph faction, but this faction again was split up into two parties, the Black and the White Guelphs. In 'the worse than Civil War,' that ensued, Dante's party was vanquished and he and many of his friends were sentenced to banishment. For twenty years, Dante wandered in exile from place to place.

4. **Proscribed.**—Outlawed or exiled. This word, from *L. pro.* before and *scribere*, to write, derives its meaning from the Roman practice of writing the names of persons doomed to death and posting the list in public.

7. **Petrarch's laureate brow.**—Petrarch was called to Rome in 1341 to receive the laureate crown awarded for his Latin poem of *Africa*, an epic on the Punic wars.

8. **Foreign scil.**—Petrarch passed many years of his life away from Florence, and chiefly in France, where he lived and wrote at *Vaucluse* near *Avignon*.

9. **Though rifled.**—The story goes that a Florentine tried to steal the body of Petrarch, but succeeded in carrying off only an arm. Curiously enough, Dante's grave was also rifled. At some

unknown period, by unknown hands, and from a motive still unexplained, his body was removed from the Sarcophagus in which it lay and was walled up in the neighbouring Church of St. Francis in a rough box, inscribed *Dantis Ossa*.

LVIII

1. "Boccaccio was buried in the Church of St. Michael and St. James, at Certaldo, a small town in the Valdeisa, which was by some supposed the place of his birth. There he passed the latter part of his life in a course of laborious study which shortened his existence; and there might his ashes have been secure, if not of honour, at least of repose. But the 'hyæna bigots' of Certaldo tore up the tombstone of Boccaccio, and ejected it from the holy precincts of St. Michael and St. James. The occasion, and, it may be hoped, the excuse for this ejectment was the making of a new floor for the Church; but the fact is, that the tombstone was taken up and thrown aside at the bottom of the building. Ignorance may share the sin with bigotry."

3. **Requiem**.—In the Roman Catholic Church a mass said or sung for the repose of a departed soul. The service takes its name from the first words of the Mass,—"*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine*," give eternal rest to them, O Lord!

4. **Who form'd.....** Who did so much to improve the Italian language.

Siren.—Charming, bewitching, fascinating, Italian is supposed to be a very musical language, and the best Italian is spoken and written in Florence, or in that part of Italy which is known as Tuscany.

[The sirens in classical mythology were sea nymphs who used to frequent an island near the coast of Italy and sing with such sweetness as to lure mariners to destruction.]

7. **Hyæna bigot's**.—Fanatical and intolerant persons with the disposition of the hyæna, cruel, savage, and cowardly. There may be a reference also to the fact that the hyæna is so voracious that it digs up graves to feed on dead bodies.

9. **For whom**. For Boccaccio. He was so hateful to those bigots that they destroyed his tomb simply because it proclaimed the fact that he was buried there and preserved his memory.

LIX

1. **Wants**.—Is without.

2. **Yet.....noted**.—The very fact that those three were not buried in the Church of Santa Croce gives additional notoriety to the Church, that is to say, it makes the Church all the more talked about. People naturally expect to find their graves here, and not finding them, they wonder why and talk about it.

3. **The Cæsar's pageant.**—A grand procession and spectacular display in honour of the Emperor of Rome.

Shorn of.—Deprived of : without.

4. **Rome's best Son.**—Brutus, Cæsar's best friend who slew Cæsar because he was ambitious. Byron apparently regards him as one of Rome's truest patriots.

[Byron is in error here. It was not at Cæsar's pageant, but at the funeral of Junia, sister of Brutus, and widow of Cassius, that the Emperor Tiberius would not allow the busts of Brutus and Cassius to be borne. The absence of these busts from the funeral, says Byron, made the people think all the more of Brutus and of the service he rendered to his country.]

6. **Fortress**.....In the days of the decline of the Roman Empire, Ravenna was strongly fortified and served as a bulwark of the Empire. It was for some time regarded as the seat of government and the capital of Italy.

7. **The immortal exile.**—Dante.

8. **Tuneful relics**—Memorials, things that survive or remain, to remind us of him who sang as a poet. The person referred to, of course, Petrarch.

LX

1. **Her pyramid.**—Byron is referring to the grand tombs and monuments to be seen in Florence, not in the Church of Santa Croce, but in the Medici Chapel, and asks of what use or of what worth are they. In one of his letters he writes:—"I also went to the Medici Chapel. Fine frippery in great slabs of various expensive stones, to commemorate fifty rotten and forgotten carcasses."

3. **Incrust.**—Encase or enclose. The word is appropriately used, as, in the fine arts, to *incrust* is to inlay and cover over with precious stones.

4. **Merchant-dukes.**—The reference is to the Medici, a distinguished Florentine family that attained to sovereign power in the 15th century. One branch of the family obtained absolute rule over Tuscany in the 16th century. The family owed its earliest distinction to the success with which its members pursued various branches of commerce. From 1484, the history of Florence is intimately bound up with the House of Medici, distinguished for their patronage of art and literature and for the liberality which they showed in devoting their wealth to the public good.

7. **Mausoleums of the Muse.**—Their memories are preserved, not in grand tombs erected over their graves, but in their names that are dear to the Muse of Poetry.

Mausoleum.—A magnificent tomb, from Mausolus, King of Caria, over whose grave, his widow erected a stately monument.

8. Men tread softly and with greater reverence on the grassy turf, dew-moistened, that covers the humble graves of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, than on the rich and costly slabs which cover the graves of princes. It is not the momentary dews that are prest, but the turf made green and fresh by these dews. There is apparently, however, a contrast intended between the polished slabs of marble that last for ages, and the sparkling dew drops that vanish after a while.

LXI

2. **Arno's dome.....**—The Uffizi, a public edifice in Florence, erected by Cosmo d' Medici, and containing one of the richest and most celebrated collections of art in the world. It is connected with the Pitti palace on the other side of the Arno, an immense palace containing a very rich and noted collection of paintings.

3. **Her rainbow sister.**—Her sister of bright and many colours—the Art of Painting that makes use of colours.

4. **But not for mine**—They are not for my heart and eyes. I care not greatly for them. Byron professed to care little for the fine arts. In one of his letters he writes:—"I know nothing of Painting. Depend upon it, of all the arts it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is most imposed upon. I never yet saw the picture or the statue which came a league within my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains, and seas, and rivers, and views, and two or three women, who went as far beyond it."

5. **To entwine.**—To associate. He has always had a greater admiration for the beauties of Nature seen in the fields than for works of Art seen in galleries.

7. **A work divine.**—A real masterpiece, inspired by heavenly genius.

8. **Calls for...**—Demands from me profound respect: compels me to bow before it in respectful acknowledgment of its excellence.

Yet it yields...—My spirit yields this homage without, however, truly and thoroughly appreciating its beauty,—without feeling that perfect delight which all true lovers of Art experience.

9. **The weapon.**—His spirit is of a different nature. The comparison is to a sword and to its temper.

LXII

1. **Temper ...**—Quality, nature, or disposition.

2. **Thrasimene's lake.**—Here Hannibal, the great Carthaginian leader, defeated the Romans in the second Punic War in the year 217 B.C. Thrasimene is to be pronounced as a word of four syllables.

8. **More at home.**—More at ease, in scenes and places more congenial to my nature.

4. **Warlike wiles.**—Cunning stratagem. Flaminius, the Roman general, foolishly allowed himself to be enticed into an ambush at Lake Thrasimene. In this battle, half the Roman army perished, and the rest were taken prisoners.

7. **Courage falls.**—The abstract is put for the concrete. The brave Romans, with no hope of escape, die in their ranks fighting desperately.

8-9. The language is very hyperbolical.

9. **Reek.**—Steam, send up vapours.

Legions.—A Roman legion was a body of troops that varied in strength from four to six thousand men at different periods. The word is used indefinitely for a large number.

LXIII

3. **And such the frenzy...**—The soldiers engaged in battle became so frantic and were seized with such paroxysms of fury, that they were oblivious or unmindful of everything else except slaughter.

5. **An earthquake**—According to the Roman historian Livy in his account of the battle, "such was their mutual animosity, so intent were they upon the battle, that the earthquake, which overthrew in great part many of the cities of Italy, which turned the course of rapid streams, poured back the sea upon the rivers, and tore down the very mountains, was not felt by one of the combatants."

6. **Stern Nature.**—Nature has more than one aspect. In storms and earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, when destruction is caused, we see Nature in her sterner or severer aspect.

7. **Yawning forth.**—Opening in chasms under their feet and swallowing them up.

8. **Winding-sheet.**—A sheet in which a dead body is wrapt before burial. Here their bucklers or shields, as they lay dead or wounded on the ground, served them as winding sheets.

LXIV

4. **Their vessel.**—The quaking earth compared to a ship tossed up and down, or to and fro, by the heaving waters of the sea.

Nature's law.—It is by no means clear what law is meant. There is confusion of thought again. It is not nature's law that recked not, but the soldiers engaged in battle who were so absorbed in the work of slaughter that they did not heed or notice the disturbance that was taking place in Nature.

LXV

7. **A name of blood.**—The name of Sanguinetto, which literally means 'of blood.' The brook which is now only 'a little rill,' has taken or acquired this name.

8. **Ye.**—Wrongly used for *you*, *ye* being the nominative form.

9. **Unwilling waters.**—The pure waters of the stream and the lake could not bear to be polluted with the blood that was shed.

LXVI

1. **Clitumnus.**—A branch of the river Tiber, Macaulay alludes to it in his Lay of *Horatius* :—

" Beyond all streams, Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear."

3. **River nymph.**—Naiads, as they were called, lower female divinities who in classical mythology, dwelt in and presided over some body of fresh water, such as a lake, or river, or fountain.

5. **The milk-white steer.**—To quote Macaulay again,—

" Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer."

9. The purity of its waters makes it a fit place for the loveliest nymphs, the most beautiful young girls, to bathe in and see themselves mirrored or reflected.

LXVII

1. **A Temple**—“No book of travels has omitted to expatiate on the temple of the Clitumnus between Foligno and Spoleto ; and no site, or scenery, even in Italy, is more worthy a description.”—BYRON.

6. The whole line, descriptive of a fish, is a good example of what is known as ‘poetic diction.’

[“Perhaps,” says Sir Walter Scott, “there are no verses in our language of happier descriptive power than the two stanzas which characterise the Clitumnus. In general poets find it so difficult to leave an interesting subject, that they injure the distinctness of the description by loading it so as to embarrass, rather than excite the fancy of the reader : or else, to avoid that fault, they confine themselves to cold and abstract generalities. Byron has in these stanzas admirably steered his course between these extremes.

* * * * *

While the eye glances over the lines we seem to feel the refreshing coolness of the scene—we hear the bubbling tale of the more rapid streams, and see the slender proportions of the rural temple reflected in the crystal depth of the calm pool.”]

LXVIII

1. **The Genius of the place.**—*Genius loci* (Latin). In Roman mythology the tutelary spirit or deity of the place.

2. **A zephyr.**—Originally a west wind, but now any soft, gentle breeze.

3. **Win to.**—Wins its way to, succeeds in reaching.

4. **Eloquent**—Speaking or appealing forcibly to the heart.

8. **Nature's baptism.**—In the Christian Church *baptism* is a religious ceremony in which a person is sprinkled over or immersed in water by a priest prior to his admission into the Church. The person so baptised is supposed to be made *spiritually* clean. What the priest does to the soul or spirit, Nature does to the body and mind, making them clean, and refreshing them with cool breezes and pleasant scenery.

To him.—All these effects are due to the genius of the place,

9. **Orisons.**—Prayers, from L, *Oratio*, speech, prayer; *orare*, to speak, utter, pray.

[*Thanks* would be more appropriate than *prayers*.]

For this suspension.....—For this momentary relief from the weariness of life and our strong aversion to it.

LXIX

2. **Velino.**—The Velino is a small stream of Central Italy, a tributary of the Nera, at its junction with which it forms the celebrated falls of Velino or Terni about 650 ft. high. Writing of these falls, Byron says "I saw the Cascata del Marmore of Terni twice, at different periods; once from the summit of the precipice, and again from the valley below. The lower view is far to be preferred, if the traveller has time for one only; but on any point of view either from above or below, it is worth all the echoes and torrents of Switzerland put together."

4. **The abyss.**—The deep gulf below into which the waters fall. *Abyss*, from a Greek word, literally means a bottomless pit.

6. **Sweat.**—Froth and foam.

8. **Phlegethon.**—One of the rivers of the lower world in Grecian mythology, in whose channel flowed flames instead of water. The name literally means 'the flaming.'

9. **In pitiless...**—Firmly fixed in their place, looking cruel and frightful.

[We first hear the roar of the waters while we are still perhaps, at some distance: when we arrive at the top of the precipice,

we see the waters falling with lightning rapidity in one great volume: and lastly, looking down, we see in the gulf or abyss below, the waters seething and foaming, in violent and unceasing commotion, as if writhing in agony like the souls of the damned in hell. The whole is a good example of the figure called climax.]

[This magnificent description of the roar and turmoil of waters at the falls of Velino, following immediately the description of the tranquil scene on the banks of the Clitumnus, affords an excellent illustration of the effect produced in poetry by the employment of contrasts. Byron makes frequent use of it in this Canto.]

LXX

2. **Round.**—If *round* is a noun here, it means a circuit, from water below to spray in the skies, and from spray in the skies to water again, but it may be an adverb for *around*.

4. **An eternal April.**—A constant fall of rain throughout the year, April being the month in which showers of rain fall.

5. **One emerald.**—One entire expanse of green.

6. **The giant element.**—The great mass of falling waters.

7. **Delirious bound.**—Wild, frantic leaps.

LXXI

1. **Column.**—An unsuitable word to use in connection with water not falling, but now flowing or sweeping in its onward course from the gulf below.

Shows.—Used intransitively in the sense of ‘appears.’

2. **The fountain...**—Inappropriate language again; Seas do not, like rivers, take their rise in fountains or springs, nor is there an infant or any other stage in their growth.

3-4. In these lines, a sea violently brought into existence as the result of geological convulsions which rend the mountains and change the aspect of the world, is compared to a child plucked from the womb of its mother in the pangs of child-birth.

7. **Like an eternity.**—A curious comparison. Perhaps what is meant is that as endless eternity swallows up every thing, so this mighty volume of rushing water gives one the impression that in its unceasing course it must sweep away and swallow up every thing that lies before it.

9. **Charming the eye**—Fascinating the beholder, just as snakes are said to fascinate their prey,—the fascination being due to the feeling of fear that is inspired.

LXXII

1. **Horribly beautiful.**—An example of the figure called *σωμόρον*. The cataract is beautiful, but its beauty is of an awe-inspiring character,—repellent rather than attractive.

3. **An Iris.**—A rainbow. See Note xxvii. 6. “It is exactly,” says Byron, “like a rainbow come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it : this effect lasts till noon.”

The infernal surge.—‘The hell of waters,’ lxix. 5.

5. **Dyes.**—In the nominative case absolute, the steady dyes or colours being unworn, that is to say, undimmed or unfaded.

8. **The torture.**—“They howl and hiss and boil *in endless torture.*” lxix. 6.

9. **Love watching Madness.**—A good example of the abstract for the concrete. In line 4, the rain-bow, as an emblem of hope, is compared to an angel of hope or to a hopeful person sitting by the bedside of a dying person. The metaphor is now changed, and the rainbow, as an emblem of love, is compared to a person with loving heart sitting by and watching calmly an insane or delirious patient in his struggles and ravings.

LXXIII

2. **The infant Alps.**—The Apennines, which are a prolongation of the Alps, but of much lower elevation are spoken of, not very appropriately, as the offspring of the latter mountains.

5. **Lauwine.**—See note xii. 7.

Might be worshipped more.—Having previously seen the loftier mountains of the Alps, his admiration for the Apennines is not as great as it would otherwise have been.

6. **Jungfrau.**—(lit. maiden or virgin), a mountain of Switzerland in the Bernese Alps, 18670 ft. high. It is one of the most magnificent mountains in Switzerland.

7. **Her never-trodden snow.**—Virgin snow; hence the name of the mountain. Byron is not correct. The summit was reached in 1812.

9. **The thunder hills.**—The Acroceraunian mountains mentioned in the next stanza. Acroceraunia is a promontary on the north-west of Epirus jutting out into the Ionian Sea. The range of mountains derived its name from the frequent thunder-storms which occurred among its peaks, (Gr. *Keraunds*, thunder.)

LXXIV

2. **Parnassus.**—A celebrated mountain of Greece, sacred to Apollo and the Muses.

5. **Ida.**—A mountain in Asia Minor at the foot of which lay the ancient city of Troy. It was regarded with affection by the Trojans, the people of Troy.

6. **Athos.**—A mountain as well as the whole peninsula on which it stands, in Macedonia.

Olympus.—A mountain in a range separating Macedonia and Thessaly. In Greek mythology, it was the abode of the gods of whom Zeus was the head.

Atlas.—A mountain in Morocco, which in Grecian mythology supported the heavens.

8. **Soracte.**—A celebrated mountain of Italy, 27 miles north of Rome, now called Monte Sant' Oreste; height, 2420 feet.

9. **Not now.**—Not covered with snow now as it was in former days when Horace described it.

The lyric Roman.—Horace, the greatest of Latin lyric poets, born in B. C. 65, died in B. C. 8.

Which asks.....—Horace refers to the mountain in one of his Odes, so the mountain may be said to appeal to Horace not to let it be forgotten.

LXXV

2. **Heaves.**—Rises, mounts upwards.

3. **On the curl** — When about to curl or curve at the top.

Hangs pausing — Seems to linger for a moment, as if with suspended motion.

4. **Who will.**—Who desires to do so.

Rake.—Search through and through, ransack.

5. **Classic raptures**—The joy or delight felt by classical scholars in quoting from the Greek and Latin poets. Byron does not share in their pleasure.

6. **Latian echoes.**—Quotations from the Latin poets, such as would be suggested by Soracte and other places mentioned in their works.

The natural order is as follows:—‘I abhorred the drilled, dull lesson too much to record with pleasure aught that recalls, &c.’ Byron tells us that as a boy he was so disgusted with having to learn Horace, word by word, that it is impossible for him now to feel any pleasure in recalling those days and the daily tasks inflicted on him.

[Whatever interest of a personal nature may attach to stanzas LXXV and LXXVI, there is little of poetry in them and Byron would have done well to have omitted them. The lines are harsh,

involved, and exceedingly prosaic. Byron's own note on these lines, however, is worth reproducing. His remarks contain a great deal of truth, and explain the stanzas. "I wish," he says "to express that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty, that we learn by rote before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed, by the didactic anticipation, at an age when we can neither feel nor understand the power of compositions which it requires an acquaintance with life, as well as Latin and Greek, to relish, or to reason upon. For the same reason, we never can be aware of the fulness of some of the finest passages of Shakespeare ('To be, or not to be,' for instance), from the habit of having them hammered into us at eight years old, as an exercise, not of mind, but of memory; so that when we are old enough to enjoy them, the taste is gone, and the appetite palled. In some parts of the continent, young persons are taught from more common authors, and do not read the best classics till their maturity.]

8. **Drilled**—Drilled into me, forced down my mind, by constant repetition, and so learnt mechanically, without any pleasure or interest.

9. **In my repugnant youth**.—In my boyhood, when I had no relish for such tasks, when they were hateful to me.

LXXVI

1. **The daily drug**.—The daily task of learning lines of Horace by rote, which was like a dose of medicine administered to him daily.

Which turned.—Which sickened my memory. As *turned* as used here means *sickened*, 'sickening' is unnecessary.

4. **Fix'd inveteracy**.—The deep-rooted or obstinate prejudice.

[The lines that follow are explained in Byron's note already quoted.]

LXXVII

3. **To understand**.—To *understand* and to *feel* are two different things. The former is intellectual: the latter emotional. One may know from the rules of prosody that the metrical arrangement of verses is perfect, without feeling and thoroughly enjoying the rhythm and melody of the lines.

5. **Moralist**.—In his *Epistles*, Horace wrote as a moralist, as a teacher of morals, setting forth the duties of life.

Rehearse.—Describe and lay down rules for the conduct of our life, which, ordinarily, is of a petty nature, made up of small matters.

6. **Nor Bard.**—One of Horace's *Epistles* is often cited as a separate work under the title of *Ars Poetica*, the *Art of Poetry*.

7. **Satirist.**—He wrote two books of Satires.

8. **Awakening.**—It is the business of the satirist to make men conscious of their follies and vices, but while employing ridicule for his purpose he should avoid giving pain. Kindly feeling and good-natured humour ought to be ingredients of all proper satire, as they were of Addison's.

LXXVIII

1. **My country.**—Rome, in her desolation, is the country of all whose hearts like Byron's have been made desolate, emptied of love and joy and happiness.

City of the soul.—A city that appeals to the heart, that inspires the deepest emotions.

2. **Orphans...**—Men, friendless and forlorn, deprived of all love and sympathy.

Must turn.....—Not exactly for comfort and consolation, but in sympathy, and to feel by comparison the pettiness of their own sorrows and sufferings.

5. **Sufferance.**—Sufferings.

6. **The cypress.**—An emblem of mourning and sadness. The tree was grown in graveyards, among tombs and monuments.

The owl.—As dwelling in lonely, deserted places, and loving solitude, the owl is also emblematic or suggestive of desolation.

8. **Whose agonies.**—The pains and sufferings of a man, however great they may be, last only for a short while. What are they in comparison with the sufferings that Rome has endured for centuries!

9. **A world.**—The ruins of a by-gone world lie scattered all over the ground.

LXXIX .

1. **Niobe.**—In Grecian mythology, Niobe was the mother of twelve children, and taunted Latona because she had only two, Apollo and Diana. Latona commanded her children to avenge the insult, and they caused all the sons and daughters of Niobe to die. Niobe was inconsolable, and wept herself to death. She has thus become the personification of female sorrow. Rome is like Niobe in being the mother of dead empires, all the empires and kingdoms that she gave birth to having ceased to exist.

8. **An empty urn.**—An allegorical picture. An urn is a vessel for preserving the ashes of the dead. The urn that Rome holds in

her hand is empty, signifying that the ashes of her illustrious dead have been scattered to the winds.

5. **The Scipios' tomb**—These ancient tombs which are situated on the Appian way, were discovered at the close of the 18th century, and are among the most interesting historical monuments that have been brought to light in Rome. The inscriptions that were found in them have been removed to the Vatican.

8. **A marble wilderness.**—A region of desolation in which lie strewn the marble fragments of temples and towers.

9. **Yellow waves.**—The Tiber is called the *Yellow Tiber* because its waters are discoloured with yellow mud.

Mantle...Cover up her ruins and hide her sufferings from the world.

LXXX

1. **The Goth.**—In 409, Alaric, King of the Visigoths, invaded Italy and sacked Rome. In 489, Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, invaded and conquered Italy, and laid the foundation of a new Ostrogothic Kingdom, which included Italia. The Goths were an ancient Teutonic tribe.

2. **Have dealt upon.**—Have worked injuriously, or have produced their evil effects upon.

The seven-hill'd.—Rome is known as the city of the Seven Hills, as it was built on seven hills,—the Aventine, Cœlian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal and Viminal.

3. **Star by star**...Die gradually, one by one, as the stars fade and disappear into darkness.

5. **The Capitol.**—The citadel of ancient Rome standing on the Capitoline Hill.

The car.—The car or chariot of the victorious general to whom, on his return from the war, was accorded the honours of a Triumph. He entered Rome in a chariot drawn by four horses, crowned with laurel, with a sceptre in one hand and a branch of laurel in the other, and was preceded by the Senate and the Magistrates, Musicians, the captives in fetters, &c., and was followed by his army on foot in marching order. The procession advanced in this order along the *Via Sacra* to the Capitol where a bull was sacrificed to Jupiter, and the laurel wreath deposited in the lap of the God.

7. **Chaos of ruins.**—'A marble wilderness.' St. lxx.

Trace.—Search, for the purpose of discovering and identifying.

The void.—The wilderness of ruins: the ground now emptied of streets and dwellings, and strewn over with fragments.

8. Lunar light.—A curious expression. A faint or dim light like that of the moon. Where all is chaos, it is impossible to identify the fragments and say to what temples or monuments they originally belonged.

9. Doubly night.—Intense or excessive darkness.

LXXXI

2. Night's daughter, Ignorance.—As night stands for darkness, and darkness for want of knowledge or ignorance, it is not clear how Ignorance can be described as Night's daughter.

Wrap.—Bad grammar. The verb should be in the singular number.

3. We but.....—We only grope in the dark with no other result than to err.

5. Knowledge spreads.—Knowledge is personified as a mother teaching her children standing at her knees, from a book spread out on her lap.

7. Stumbling.....—The traveller in a desert has no landmarks and no map or chart to guide him. He can only trust to his recollections and pursue his course in a blundering manner.

8. Eureka.—A Greek word meaning 'I have found.' It was the exclamation of the Syracusan astronomer, Archimedes, when, bathing in his cistern, he suddenly discovered a method of solving a problem that had greatly exercised his mind. So in the course of our investigations, we fancy we have made some discovery and are overjoyed.

9. Mirage.—An optical illusion due to the refraction of light. The traveller in a desert imagines that he sees water and trees and houses in the distance, and finds himself deceived by a false appearance. Similarly, rejoicing at first at our supposed discovery, we very soon find that we were mistaken.

LXXXII

2. The trebly hundred.....—According* to Orosius, the number of triumphs accorded to victorious generals was 320.

3. When Brutus made.—The allusion is to the assassination of Julius Cæsar by Brutus and his fellow-conspirators. As Byron hated all tyrants, he glorifies this deed of Brutus's as an act of justifiable tyrannicide, and professes to believe that Brutus as the champion of freedom acquired more fame by it than Julius Cæsar by his conquests.

5. Tully's voice.—See note, St. XLIV. 4.

Virgil's lay.—The word *lay* is utterly inapplicable to the poems of Virgil, one of the world's greatest epic poets. He was born in 70 B.C. and died in 19 B.C. His most famous work is the *Aeneid*.

6. Livy's pictured page.—The glowing and graphic pages of Livy, Rome's greatest historian.

7. Her resurrection.—These glorious memories, or these glorious legacies will yet prove the salvation of Rome and enable her to rise Phoenix like from her ashes. It does not appear, however, from the words that follow, that Byron is referring to the political resuscitation of Rome. Her new life is to be seen in the immortality of fame she has acquired by her great authors and great artists and great soldiers.

8. Earth.—The Roman Empire occupied a great portion of the Earth. It included the countries now known as Holland, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal, Italy, the southern half of the Austrian Empire, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, Egypt, Tripoli and Tunis, Morocco and a great portion of Britain.

9. That brightness.....—“Within the borders of the Roman Empire there prevailed the greatest blessing of the Roman rule, the *Pax Romana*, or ‘Roman Peace.’ For at least two centuries, the whole of this vast region enjoyed a general reign of peace and security such as it never knew before and has never known since. That peace meant also social and industrial prosperity and development. It meant an immense increase in settled population, and an immense advance in—particularly in the *West*—civilised manners and intellectual interests” Professor Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul*.

Again, “Take out,” says Professor Tucker, “that year (the year 69 A.D.) from the imperial history; count a hundred years before and more than a hundred years after, and it would be impossible to find in the history of the world any period at which peace, and probably contentment, was so widely and continuously spread.”

LXXXIII

1. Whose chariot.....Whose career was one of continued success and prosperity.

Fortune's wheel.—The wheel of Fortune is usually emblematic of the vicissitudes of life,—the changes of adversity and prosperity to which man is subject. Here, however, the wheel of Fortune is the wheel of good fortune alone, and on such wheels was borne the chariot of Sylla, more correctly Sulla, who, on account of his prosperity, took the title of ‘Felix.’

2. Sylla —Iullus Cornelius Sulla, a famous Dictator of Rome, born in 138 B.C.; died 78 B.C.

3. **Thy country's foes.**—Sylla or Sulla was victorious in his wars against Mithridates the Great, King of Pontus, who had made himself master of Asia Minor, and also of Greece.

4. **Thy own wrongs.**—Sylla's great rival and enemy in Rome was Marius, who resorted to deeds of violence to deprive Sylla of his command, forcing Sylla to fly from Rome. When Marius became all powerful at Rome, he proscribed Sylla and confiscated his property.

5. **Hoarded vengeance.**—The vengeance which Sylla delayed taking till he had completed the conquest of Asia and which had accumulated in the meanwhile. When Sylla returned to Rome, he satisfied his vengeance by the murder and proscription of thousands.

Thine eagles.—The Roman standards. After expelling Mithridates from Greece, Sylla crossed into Asia and was everywhere victorious.

7. **Annihilated senates.**—Terrified the Senates of Rome into abject submission and so rendered them utterly powerless against his will.

Roman, too.—Sylla was stern and cruel and pitiless, but with all his vices, he was thoroughly Roman in spirit, in his courage and patriotism. He had made himself Dictator for an indefinite period, but of his own accord he laid down his office and retired into private life.

9. **An atoning smile.**—A smile, a willingness or cheerfulness that made amends for his crimes and vices.

A more than.—The crown or wreath of the Dictator. As Dictator, he exercised more than royal power, more power than belongs to any earthly king. Ordinarily, the expression would mean a spiritual crown, a crown in heaven.

[“Certainly, were it not for these two traits in the life of Sylla, alluded to in this stanza, we should regard him as a monster unredeemed by any admirable quality. The *atonement* of his voluntary resignation of Empire may perhaps, be accepted by us, as it seems to have satisfied the Romans, who if they had not respected, must have destroyed him.]

LXXXIV

1. **The dictatorial wreath.**—The office and power of a Dictator. The expression is not to be literally interpreted.

2. **That which made.**—Rome. It was Rome that elevated Sylla to a position which made him more than mortal.

3. **Supine.**—Prostrate and helpless. *Supine* properly means lying on the back and is the opposite of *prone*.

4. A very harsh line and rather involved. The order is. 'Couldst thou divine that Rome should thus be laid so supine by aught than Romans.' Rome in the days of Sylla was so great and powerful that he could not possibly have foreseen to what an abject position she would be reduced, not by men like the Romans themselves, but by foreign enemies, by barbarians, whom she had conquered and despised.

6. **She who veil'd**.....—Like a dark shadow flung far and wide over the earth, Rome's imperial power extended over many lands, which she proudly dominated and domineered over.

8. **O'er canopied**.—Covered over as with a canopy, the canopy being the overspreading wings of her eagles.

Failed.—Was lost in the distance; could not be discerned. Rome's dominions were boundless.

9. **Her rushing wings**.—The wings of Rome's Eagle. Rome is compared to an eagle flying with outstretched wings, and in her eagle flight, that is to say, wherever her legions went, her power was made manifest.

LXXXV

1. **Our own**.—Our own countryman, Cromwell, who was the wisest of usurpers as Sylla was the greatest of victors.

3. **Swept off senates**.—The reference is to Cromwell's dismissal of the remnant of the Long Parliament, known as the Rump Parliament, in 1653.

He hewed the throne.—He it was who dragged Charles I, down from his throne and brought his head to the block, that is to say, caused him to be beheaded.

5. **What crimes it costs**.—Crimes have to be committed before freedom can be won even for a short space of time. Cromwell's crimes were rebellion, regicide, the arbitrary exercise of power and the violation of the constitution.

7. **The moral lurks**.....—The moral lesson which we may learn from Cromwell's fate or destiny, *viz*, that earthly glories, the things which we strive for in life, bring no real happiness. Cromwell's career was a very successful one. He rose to be king in all but name, and yet his life, in the midst of all his greatness, was not a happy one.

8. **His day**.....—“On the 3rd of September 1650, Cromwell gained the victory of Dunbar; a year afterwards he obtained 'his crowning Mercy' of Worcester; and a few years later, on the same day, which he had even esteemed the most fortunate for him, died.” —BYRON.

9. **Two realms**.—The battle of Dunbar made him master of Scotland: the battle of Worcester, master of England.

Happier.—He was happier when he died than when he won his two great victories.

LXXXVI

1. **The same moon.**—The same month,—the month of September.

3. **The throne of force.**—The throne (metaphorically), the kingly position to which he had elevated himself and which he retained by force of arms.

4. **Earth's preceding clay.**—A curious expression. The earth which existed before he came into existence, and out of which he was made. After death, this body of ours returns, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

8. **Less happy.**—Cromwell's fate teaches us that there is more of happiness in death than in the things we strive for in life, in the pursuit of which we waste our energies, only to experience bitter disappointment.

9. **Were they.....**—Ah, if man could only learn to estimate these things at their real value, to see how vain and illusory they are and how little real happiness they bring, how different would his lot in life be !

LXXXVII

1. **Dread statue.**—The statue of Pompey at Rome supposed to be the same statue at the foot of which in the Senate House, Julius Cæsar was assassinated. In his Play of Julius Cæsar, Shakespeare refers to it—“ Even, at the base of Pompey's statue which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar lay.”

2. **The austerest form....** ..In the severest simplicity, without any adornments.

5. **Folding his robe.**—When Cæsar saw his friend Brutus among the assassins, he offered no resistance, but folding his robes round him, he submitted to his fate.

7. **Nemesis.**—The Greek goddess of Retribution. She was regarded as a personification of the righteous anger of the gods, inflexibly severe to the proud and insolent; the avenging Fate who checked and punished the favourites of Fortune, when they proved unworthy. Cæsar had triumphed over his great rival Pompey, but as he did not deserve his good fortune or as he had sought to make a bad use of the power he acquired by this triumph, retribution overtook him. He was sacrificed as it were, at the altar of Pompey (Pompey's Statue) by Nemesis.

8. **And thou, too.**—There ought to be a change in the person of the verb, from the 3rd to the 2nd, *didst* instead of *did*.

Pompey.—E. Pompeius, surnamed Magnus, or the Great, a distinguished Roman general, rival of Julius Cæsar. He was

defeated by Cæsar in the battle of Pharsalia in 49 B.C. and having fled to Egypt, he was stabbed on landing by one of his former centurions in 48 B.C.

9. **Puppets.**--Seeing that in spite of all their greatness, they died and died so ingloriously, ought we not to regard them as mere puppets or dolls, playthings in the hands of Fate,—marionettes in a puppet show,—rather than as great conquerors.

LXXXVIII

1. **The thunder-stricken**.....—The reference is to a bronze statue or image of a she-wolf suckling the twins Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of Rome. The image bears traces of having been struck by lightning, and is regarded as one of the most interesting relics of the ancient city.

3. **The milk of conquest.**—The milk which infused into thy foster children a warlike spirit and the desire for conquest.

The dome.—The building known as the Capitoline Museum, where the statue is preserved.

5. **Of the mighty heart.**—Of great courage.

6. **The great founder.**—Romulus.

7. **The Roman Jove's**.....—Shafts of lightning hurled by Jove or Jupiter, the greatest of all the Roman gods, the supreme deity, corresponding to the Greek Zeus. He wielded the thunderbolts.

LXXXIX

2. **The men of iron.**—The firm, stern, resolute Romans of former days.

3. **Men bled.**—Men waged wars and shed their blood in imitation of the Romans.

6. **At apish distance.**—In far-off imitation of the Romans. In later times men tried to follow in the footsteps of the Romans and to emulate their deeds, but theirs was only a feeble imitation, and what they accomplished fell far short of what the Romans had achieved.

To mimic or to imitate is characteristic of apes and monkeys.

8. **One vain man.**—Napoleon Bonaparte who alone, says Byron, has approached within measurable distance of what men like Julius Cæsar accomplished.

Who.....grave.—When Byron wrote this in 1817, Napoleon was still alive, a prisoner in the island of St. Helena.

9. Vanquish'd by himself.—He fell a victim to his own inordinate ambition, and to his own selfish aims.

To his own slaves.....—He was finally vanquished and made a prisoner by those whom he had once vanquished and treated with haughty disdain.

XC

1. The fool.... dominion.—Napoleon deceived himself in believing that the conquests he made, and the dominion he exercised, were of a lasting character. Power or dominion that is based only on military force, that is acquired only to satisfy inordinate vanity and ambition, that does not sway the hearts of men, is not true or real dominion.

2. Bastard Cæsar.—A false and spurious kind of Caesar: one apparently, but not really or genuinely, like Cæsar, —a sham imitation of him.

3. The Roman's.—Cæsar's.

4. Was modell'd.—Cæsar's mind was of a more refined nature than Napoleon's, or Napoleon's was more of the earth, earthy,—coarse or gross.

5. A judgment cold.—A judgment not swayed by any impulse or emotion.

6. An immortal instinct.—An instinct, an intuitive power greater than that which belongs to ordinary mortals.

Which redeem'd.—Which atoned or made up for.

7. The frailties.....—The weaknesses of a heart which, while very tender at times and susceptible to female charms, was also exceedingly courageous and resolute.

8. Alcides....—At one time when he fell in love with Cleopatra, he seemed like Hercules sitting at the feet of Omphale and holding her distaff as she spun. Alcides is another name for Hercules.

9. Cleopatra.—The beautiful queen of Egypt, who captivated Cæsar when he followed Pompey to Egypt.

And nowhe beam'd.—At another time; his warrior spirit would break forth like rays of the sun from behind a cloud and display itself in deeds of courage and of enterprise.

Cæsar is shown to us in two characters; we see him as a sentimental lover: we see him also as a brave soldier, conquering wherever he went.

Beamed.—This is hardly a suitable word here. To *beam* metaphorically used, means to have a smiling face, to look pleased and happy.

[Byron in this stanza, hardly does justice to Cæsar, the foremost man in all the world. To quote Dr. Conyers Middleton, "Cæsar was endowed with every great and noble quality that could exalt human nature, and give a man the ascendant in society; formed to excel in peace, as well as war; provident in council; fearless in action; and executing what he had resolved with amazing celerity; generous beyond measure to his friends; placable to his enemies; and for parts, learning, eloquence, scarce inferior to any man."]

XCI

1. **Cameand saw.**—An English translation of the Latin words *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, in which Cæsar is said to have announced to his friend Amintius his victory at Zela, in Asia Minor, over Pharnaces, son of Mithridates, who had rendered aid to Pompey.

Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, refers to this saying as "Cæsar's thrasonical brag of 'I came, saw and overcame.'"

The man.—Napoleon.

2. **Who would have.....**—Who wished to train and discipline his armies in such a way as to subdue them to his will and make them thoroughly obedient. Napoleon, it is well known, established such an ascendancy over the minds of his French soldiers, that they were entirely devoted to him and ready to follow him anywhere and everywhere and do his bidding at all times.

2. **His eagles.**—The French standards emblematic of French battalions.

To flee.—To fly. To *flee* would ordinarily mean to run away.

3. **Like.....falcon.**—The eagle spirit of the French, manifested in the early days of the French Revolution, that wild, turbulent, independent and ungovernable spirit, was subdued by Napoleon when he rose to power in France. From eagles the French were converted into tamed falcons, still birds of prey, but now completely under control and made obedient to the commands of their master.

3. **In the Gallic van.**—In the front of the French armies.

5. **A deaf heart.**—A heart that would listen to no appeals, that would yield to no 'soft solicitations.'

7. **One weakest.**—His only weakness or frailty was vanity, which Byron describes as the weakest of all weaknesses.

8. **Coquettish.**—Not serious or in earnest, but playing or trifling with.

9. **Avouch.**—Solemnly declare.

Byron thinks that Napoleon had no definite aims in view, that he himself would not have been able to tell us what the real purpose of his life was. The brief sketch here given of Napoleon does not bring out clearly the character of the greatest soldier of modern times. Byron gives a fuller and, perhaps, a better estimate of him in Canto III, St. XXXVI to XLI.

XCII

2. **To level him.**—To reduce or bring him down to the same position as others,—to the dust from which all men spring. Death is the greatest of all levellers. Napoleon would not wait patiently till death came to him in the usual course.

Few years.—Incorrectly used for ‘a few years.’ Had Napoleon remained content with what he had achieved, he would have died like the Cæsars in a few years, while still retaining power, but his restless ambition urged him on and brought his career to an inglorious end.

3. **Had fix'd him.**—Had placed him unalterably with, or in the same position as, the imperial Cæsars ‘dead and turned to clay.’

4. **For this.**—Only to share the fate of all men : “The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

5. **The arch of triumph.**—Grand arches are frequently erected as memorials of victory, like the arches of Titus and Trajan in Rome and Napoleon’s Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

6. **Without an ark.**—In the Bible we read that at the time of the Deluge, Noah built himself an ark (a large boat) by means of which he and his family escaped from the overwhelming waters. Here we have a deluge, not of water, but of blood poured out in torrents in the great wars that have been waged, but no means of escape has been provided for poor, suffering men from this deluge.

9. **Ebbs but to reflow.**—There are intervals or periods of peace, but these periods are followed by wars. Wars cease for awhile, but only to be renewed.

Renew thy rainbow.—After the Deluge, when the waters had subsided, God, we are told, caused a rainbow to appear as a sign or covenant that He would never again destroy the earth with a deluge. Byron prays that God may enter into a covenant with men to put an end to all wars. How vain all such appeals to the Deity are, we know perfectly well. There have been several great wars since Byron wrote, and this earth of ours has never been more deluged with blood than it is now.

XCIII

1. **This barren being.**—This useless, unprofitable life of ours.

The following is a translation of a passage in one of Cicero's works which is in great part reproduced in this stanza:—

“Almost all the ancients, who have maintained that nothing could be really known, grasped, understood, that our senses are limited, our minds feeble, the space of human life short, that truth lies deeply buried, that opinion and conventionality rule in all cases, no room being left for truth to hold sway,—in brief, that darkness surrounds us on every side.” Byron adds “the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed since Cicero wrote this have not removed any of the imperfections of humanity, and the complaints of the ancient philosophers may, without injustice or affectation, be transcribed in a poem written yesterday.”

2. Narrow.—Very limited and circumscribed.

3. Truth a gem.....—It is a common saying that “Truth lies at the bottom of a well.” It is so difficult to be got at.

4. Weigh'd..... scale.—Things are judged and determined, approved or disapproved, not according to their intrinsic merits, not according as they are right or wrong, but according as they are in agreement or disagreement with custom. We are all the slaves of custom and dare not depart from it, although we know custom to be false or wrong, and injurious.

5. Opinion.—What we call public opinion, the opinion of the great majority, is all powerful.

Whose veil . . .—It prevails everywhere, spreading ignorance and hindering the light of knowledge.

7. Are accidents.—Right and wrong are not regarded as essential. In our conduct and in our actions we are not governed by the all important consideration as to whether they are right or wrong. If they happen to be right, so much the better, perhaps, but that is not necessary.

Men grow pale.—Men are afraid of the honest conclusions to which their own minds lead them,—afraid not merely to give expression to their conclusions, but even to entertain them.

9. Earth.....light.—The world cannot possibly have too much light. ‘Light, more light’ ought to be the cry everywhere. But there are men intellectually gifted who are timid by nature, who keep their opinions to themselves, who are afraid to avow their honest beliefs when these run counter to prevailing beliefs. They are afraid of the consequences to themselves and of the evil effects which it is supposed they may have on the world at large.

XCIV

2. Rotting—Stagnating in their corrupt customs and beliefs, and making no improvement.

3. **Their trampled nature.**—Their nature crushed and subdued under the iron heels of the tyrant custom, and, so prevented from growing and developing, men are not conscious of the slavish condition to which their minds have been reduced, and they hug to themselves their old beliefs and customs and glory in them.

4. **Hereditary rage.**—The passionate feelings which they have inherited from their fathers and forefathers. *Rage*, as used here, does not mean *anger*, but strong attachment to or eager desire for some object,—here beliefs and customs.

5. **Inborn slaves.**—Men who are mentally and intellectually slaves, or men who are born slaves.

Who wage . . . Ignorant of the fact that they are really in a state of bondage, they resist all change and reform, and fight in defence of customs and beliefs that bind them like chains.

7. **Gladiator-like.**—The gladiators of Rome were trained, professional fighters, for the most part prisoners and slaves, who fought and died, not for freedom, but 'to make a Roman holiday,' to afford amusement to the people.

The word *gladiator* comes from the Lat. *gladius*, a sword, and literally means therefore a swordsman.

8. **Arena.**—The central part of an amphitheatre or an enclosed space for gladiatorial fights. The word literally means a place strewn with sand. L. *arena*, *arena*, sand, a sandy place. The world is one vast arena in which men, the slaves of custom, with no desire to free themselves from their fetters, fight against reform and live and die the victims of oppression.

XCV

1. **Men's creeds.**—Men's religious beliefs. There are various kinds of tyranny,—social, political, religious. What Byron has said does not apply to the last.

2. **Man and his Maker.**—A man's religious beliefs are his own concern. They are a matter between himself and his God, to whom alone they are known and to whom alone he is responsible for them. No one has a right to question or interfere with the religious beliefs of another.

Things allow'd.....—Things done openly and publicly, things that are no secret, but are known to all the world,—social and political matters.

6. **Earth's rulers.**—The Emperors of Russia and Austria, and the King of Prussia, who after the downfall of Napoleon, formed what was called the Holy Alliance. The League was concluded at Paris in September 1815, its real objects being to maintain the power and influence of the existing dynasties. England refused to be a party to it.

7. **The apes of him.**—The imitators of Napoleon.

8. **And shook them.**—The absolute monarchs of Europe sat on their thrones in luxurious ease and comfort, neglectful of their duties and 'careless of mankind,' till Napoleon awoke them from their fancied security and made them tremble.

9. **Too glorious.....**—Napoleon's glory would have been transcendent indeed, if he had done nothing more than teach tyrants the useful lesson that they were but mortal after all, that they had duties to perform, and that men had rights; but unfortunately, he became a tyrant himself, and he who had conquered tyrants becoming a tyrant himself, was at last conquered by those very tyrants whom he had once humbled to the dust.

XCVI

3. **Columbia.**—A poetical name for America. The name is formed from Columbus, the discoverer of America.

4. **Pallas.**—The Goddess Athene (called by the Romans Minerva) who, according to Grecian mythology, sprang fully armed from the head of Zeus. So the United States, strong in arms, victorious in war, sprang into existence all at once as an independent country.

5. **Must such minds.**—Is it the case that the love of Freedom can be fostered only in countries 'stern and wild,' in countries of the mountain and the flood and of the forest primeval?

8. **Washington.**—The great American patriot, soldier and statesman, to whom the United States owed their independence.

XCVII

1. **France got drunk.**—The reference is to the French Revolution when the most atrocious crimes were perpetrated by a people maddened and infuriated by bloodshed.

2. **Saturnalia.**—Originally, a festival held by the Romans in honour of Saturn, during which the citizens, with their slaves, gave themselves up to unrestrained freedom and mirth. From this, we get the meaning 'a time of disorder and misrule' and then the passions and vices, the wild and dissolute revelry, to which men give themselves up at such a time.

3. **To Freedom's cause.**—The French Revolutionists put themselves forward as the champions of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality, but the crimes which they committed stained the cause for which they contended; and horrified by those crimes, even the staunchest lovers of Freedom in England and other countries lost faith in that cause. Despotic sovereigns found in those crimes an excuse for the most repressive and coercive measures, and as a result of the reaction that set in, the cause of freedom was hindered.

4. The deadly days.—The reference apparently is to that period in the French Revolution known as the Reign of Terror when the most horrible deeds were perpetrated.

5. Vile Ambition.—The ambition of Napoleon which changed republican France into an Empire, and made him, as Emperor, more despotic than any of the other sovereigns of Europe.

6. His hopes.—Man's hopes of freedom so grievously frustrated by the course Napoleon took.

An adamantine wall.—An impassable barrier. An obstacle or obstruction not to be broken down.

Adamantine—Hard and impenetrable. *Adamant* is from a Greek word which means that cannot be cut or broken. The name is applied to any very hard substance like iron which cannot easily be broken. *Diamond* is another form of the word *adamant*.

7. The base pageant—The splendour of Napoleon's court, after he had made himself Emperor,—base, because his power was an outrage on liberty, and did violence to truth and justice. It was something unworthy and contemptible.

8. Are grown . . .—Are made an excuse for endless oppression, for keeping nations for ever in a state of bondage.

9. Which nips life's tree.—Which hinders the growth of freedom, or which prevents man from developing his true nature.

Dooms man's worst.—Dooms man to his worst fate.

His second fall.—Man's first fall was when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and were expelled from Paradise. His second fall is when from a state of freedom he is flung into a condition of slavery.

XCVIII

2. Like the thunder-storm.—The comparison is by no means clear, unless it is a fact that in a thunder-storm, the clouds force their way against the wind.

Against the wind.—A banner or flag streams with the wind, that is, in the direction in which the wind blows. The banner of freedom, however, streams *against* the wind,—contending, that is, with the forces that would destroy freedom. In other words, Freedom, though so rudely assailed, still survives, still makes its influence felt in the hearts of men. The love of freedom has not been extinguished.

3. Trumpet voice.—Loud and soul-stirring voice, inspiring courage in the hearts of those who hear it, and calling them to arms.

Though broken now.—Though only faintly heard now.

4. **The tempest.**—The storm of war that swept over Europe. That storm has blown over and its thunder claps are no longer heard, peace having been restored. The sounds that are heard now are not the sounds of war, but the appeals and exhortations of the lovers of freedom, who strive to make their voices heard.

7. **The sap.**—That which feeds and nourishes freedom. The spirit of freedom still survives in spite of oppression and all that freedom has suffered.

8. **The North.**—England. The love of freedom is still planted in the hearts of Englishmen. [There is a piling up of metaphors in this stanza. We have first the banners of Freedom, then the trumpet of Freedom and lastly the tree of Freedom. Freedom has suffered severely in the long struggle against despotism, but it has not been extinguished: its spirit still survives and when better days come, the world will enjoy its benefits.]

XOIX

6. **The garland of eternity.**—The ivy being an evergreen creeper, entwining itself round old ruins, it seems like a garland that will never wither, that will last for ever, and so is in striking contrast with the ruins around.

9. **A woman's grave.**—The grave or tomb of Cecilia Metella, wife of Crassus, the Triumvir, the wealthiest Roman of his time, “This tomb of a woman has become the dungeon.—keep of a castle, and all the care that Cecilia Metella's husband could bestow to secure endless peace for her beloved relics, only sufficed to make that handful of precious ashes, the nucleus of battles long ages after her death.”—HAWTHORNE.

The tomb is a circular tower 70 ft. in diameter, two or three miles from Rome.

1. **The lady... dead**—A lady *par excellence* or pre-eminent among dead ladies, as one might infer from the greatness of her tomb.

3. **Or more.....**—Was she worthy of being the wife of a Roman, a greater honour than being the wife of a king.

5. **Her beauties.**—Her beautiful features; her charms of face and form.

8. **Where meaner relics**—In a place sacred to her and to her alone, where the remains of no ordinary mortals could be deposited by the side of one of such exalted character.

9. **To commemorate.....**—To preserve the memory of one whose lot in life was far above or very different from that of ordinary mortals. [A tomb of such a nature, intended to last for ever

would naturally excite curiosity and give rise to various conjectures as to the person buried beneath it. It would indeed be natural to suppose that the person so honoured could be no ordinary person.]

OI

4. **A matron**.....—A lady as lofty in character and as stately and dignified in her deportment as Cornelia, the mother of the two illustrious tribunes Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, on whose tomb the Roman people inscribed the words “Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi.”

5. **Egypt's graceful queen**.—Cleopatra, a woman of remarkable beauty and powers of fascination which she exercised over Julius Caesar and afterwards over Mark Antony. She was gay, lively and witty.

5-7. Was she a woman of light character like Cleopatra, gay and pleasure loving, or was she a woman of unyielding, inflexible chastity?

7. **Did she lean**.....—Did she yield to the weakness of love: was she as a woman, susceptible of the tender passion.

8. **Bar**.—Shut out or excluded. Weak women very often ‘love not wisely, but too well,’ and suffer in consequence.

9. **For such**.....—The affections are griefs. Love is often an unsatisfied longing. It has its pangs: it brings with it sighs and tears. See Stanzas OXIX—OXXI.

OII

4. **Might gather**.—To be taken in connection with, ‘it may be’ in l. 1,—‘it may be that...lond might gather,’—a very awkward construction continued in lines 6 and 7. What is implied is that it is possible that such a thing would happen though it is a mere fancy.

5. **The doom**.....—It is an old saying that those whom the gods love, die early.

7. **A sunset charm**.—The face of one dying in early youth from consumption with a hectic flush on her cheek is often very beautiful. This beauty is compared to the beauty of the sky at evening, when the sun is setting and the day is dying, the glow in the sky being like the hectic flush.

8. **Hectic light**.—In the more acute stages of the wasting disease called consumption, there is fever called hectic fever, which is accompanied by flushing of the cheeks. This flushing is known as the ‘hectic flush.’

Hesperus—The evening star. Just as the evening star is seen when the day is dying or is dead, so this hectic flush betokens the death of the person on whose cheeks it is seen.

9. **Consuming cheek.**—The cheek that is being consumed, that is wasting away.

Autumnal leaf-like red.—The hectic flush that is like the red of the leaves of autumn when they are about to fall.

CIII

4. **A something of the day.**—In some slight manner, the beauty of her younger days when she took a pride in combing and plaiting and dressing her tresses, faded and neglected in her old age.

9. **Behold.....**—See in this tomb a proof either of his love or his pride.

CIV

4. **Recollected music.**—The joys of other days which fond memory brings before him.

5. **Cloudy.**—A curious epithet to apply to *groan*. Apparently means dull, subdued, as if muffled by the clouds.

8. **Bodied.**—Embodied, put into bodily shape.

Forth.—From out of my mind.

Heated.—Over-wrought: excited or stirred with deep emotion.

9. **The floating wreck.....**—Byron appears to be speaking here, not of the ruins of Rome scattered around him, but of what they suggest to him, the ruin of his own life, the ruin of all his hopes and happiness, of all his plans and purposes. His life is compared to a ship that has struck upon a rock and suffered shipwreck. The vessel has gone to pieces, but fragments of it float about, that is to say, recollections survive, and fragments of the high hopes and purposes with which he had set out in life.

CV

The metaphor is kept up in this stanza. He has made shipwreck of his life. He has lost much, but from what little remains to him, he would like to build for himself 'a little bark of hope,' he would like, that is, in a modest way, to form some plan or project to shape some project, which might make him hopeful of a little happiness, and give him courage to renew the struggle against the troubles of life that so rudely assail him.

5. **The solitary shore.....**—His lonely heart, now made desolate, where all his cherished hopes have perished, and all the things that were once so dear to him have ceased to exist.

9. **There woos.....** 'But what is there for him to live for now?' Bereft of home and domestic happiness, with nothing to hope and care for, what can he make the purpose and object of his future life? Why should he continue a hopeless struggle against fate?

CVI

1. The ruined heart and the ruined city are in accord, and the howling of the winds, sounds like music to his distracted mind.

3. **Temper.**—Blend, mingle.

5. **The bird of darkness.**—The owl that loves to dwell in darkness in lonely places.

6. **The Palatine.**—One of the seven hills on which Rome was built. Here stood the palace of the Caesars and the mansions of the highest nobility, now all in ruins.

8. **Upon such a shrine.**—In the presence of such utter desolation, in the presence of such unutterable woe, what are the sorrows and sufferings of any individual man. They are trivial in comparison. The ground has been made sacred, as it were, by the relics of departed greatness that are scattered all around, and standing on it, one is awed into silence.

CVII

2. **Matted and mass'd.**—Entangled and collected together in one mass.

4. **Frescos.**—Paintings on plastered walls, or walls covered with paintings.

5. **Where the owl.**—These subterraneous chambers are so dark, that the owl opens its eyes during the day, imagining it to be midnight.

8. **These are walls.**—All that antiquarian knowledge is able to say is that these are walls, or mere fragments, but what or whose walls they are, whether of temples, baths, or halls, no one can tell.

9. **The Imperial Mount**—The Palatine where the Imperial Caesars dwelt. From this fact we get the word *palace*.

[“The Palatine is one mass of ruins, particularly on the side towards the Circus Maximus. The very soil is formed of crumbled brick work. Nothing has been told, nothing can be told to satisfy the belief of any but a Roman antiquary.” “The voice of Marius,” says Sir Walter Scott, “could not sound more deep and solemn among the ruined arches of Carthage, than the strains of the Pilgrim amid the broken shrines and fallen statues of her subduer.”]

CVIII

1. **There.**—In the ruins of Rome to which he points.

All human history tells the same story,—teaches the same lesson. History repeats itself. It is the same story told over and over again.

6. **Hath but one page.**—Tells the same story or teaches the same lesson. In the history of all empires, we find the same stages of growth and decay. First there is Freedom with all the manly virtues that Freedom breeds, then with conscious strength comes the lust of conquest and military glory, then follow wealth and luxury with all their attendant evils and enervating effects, and then decline and fall.

'T is better.....This lesson is more plainly taught in Rome: the story can be more easily read here.

7. **Gorgeous Tyranny.**—The splendour of imperial Rome,—the magnificent display that was made by her despotic rulers, who gathered from all quarters of the world works of art of priceless value, and the most beautiful and the most costly things that men could desire.

CIX

1. **Here.**—On Mount Palatine.

2. **There . . . feeling.**—The objects to be seen are such as awaken feelings of all kinds.

3. **Thou pendulum.**—Man who like a swinging pendulum, oscillates between smiles and tears, between joy and sorrow.

4. **Obliterated plan.**—The plan of that portion of the city built on the Palatine has been completely effaced. It cannot be traced out now amidst the ruins that lie scattered over the mount.

6. **The pyramid.....**The mount rose above the city like a pyramid, and from the top of it again, like the pinnacles of a church, there rose into the air the golden roofs of palaces.

7. **Glory's gewgaws**—The objects of splendour in which glory manifests itself, but which in the eyes of the philosopher are merely gewgaws, showy trifles of no real value.

8. **Till the sun's rays.....**Till the dazzling splendour of these objects imparted additional brightness to the rays of the sun.

CX

2. **Nameless column.**—Nameless in Byron's time, but since discovered to be the column of Phocas, a Roman Emperor. The column speaks eloquently of the vanity of human greatness. What can human greatness be worth when the memorials of it lose all their significance, and we cannot even tell in whose honour they were raised.

Titus.—The conqueror of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The son of the Emperor Vespasian, he became Emperor himself in A. D. 79, and proved an enlightened and benevolent ruler.

4 Crown me—The laurel wreaths that once encircled the brows of the Emperors of Rome have perished and have given place to the ivy that now mantles the ruins of their palaces, and from this ivy we may, if we choose, weave garlands for ourselves. The emblems of honour have departed: the emblems of age and decay alone remain.

6. Trajan's.—Trajan became sole Emperor of Rome in A. D. 98 and died in 117.

[Whose pillar or column it is that we see,—by whom or in honour of whom it was erected, we cannot say or we have forgotten. Let us call it then the pillar of Time, for while we cannot say whose victories it commemorates, Time, we are sure, is the greatest of all conquerors, who derides and destroys the works of men.]

8. Apostolic statues.—The statues of the Apostles, the immediate followers or successors of Christ. *Climb*, are lifted up, or raised to the top.

[A statue of the Apostle St. Peter was placed by one of the Popes on the top of Trajan's pillar and a statue of St. Paul on the column of Marcus Aurelius.]

9. The imperial urn—The following description of Trajan's column is taken from Wheeler's *Familiar Allusions*:—“An interesting relic of ancient Rome and the most beautiful historical column in the world. It was dedicated to the Emperor Trajan, as the inscription says, by the Senate and Roman people, A. D. 114. On the summit formerly stood a lofty statue of Trajan holding in his hand a gilded globe. The globe is now in the museum of the Capitol. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Pope Sextus V. erected a statue of St. Peter upon the column in place of that of Trajan, which had fallen to the ground. The ashes of the Emperor rest under this column.” It will be seen from this that it was not an urn, as was erroneously supposed, but a globe that was held in Trajan's hand.

CXI

2. They.—The ashes of the Emperor Trajan in the imperial urn that once was at the top of the pillar.

3. With these.—With the stars. The noble, lofty spirit of Trajan was such as would soar to the stars in heaven as its fitting abode.

5. After.—Afterwards, after Trajan.

6. His conquests.—Trajan greatly extended the Roman Empire by his conquests. He converted Dacia, Armenia and Mesopotamia into Roman provinces.

7. **A mere Alexander.**—Merely a great conqueror like Alexander, who was actuated by no other desire than the lust of conquest.

7-8. **Unstained.....blood and wine.**—The marvellous successes of Alexander dazzled his judgment and inflamed his passions. He became a slave to debauchery and his caprices were as cruel as they were ungrateful. In a drunken brawl he murdered his own foster-brother, Clitus. Nevertheless it is wrong to speak of him as 'a mere Alexander.' He was more than a mere conqueror.

9. **Sovereign.**—Supreme, of the highest order.

"Trajan," says Byron, "was *proverbially* the best of the Roman princes, and it would be easier to find a sovereign uniting exactly the opposite characteristics than one possessed of all the happy qualities ascribed to this emperor."

CXII

1. **The rock of Triumph.**—The Capitol to the top of which the chariots of the victorious generals ascended in the Triumphs accorded to them.

2-3. **The steep Tarpeian.**—The Tarpeian rock from which traitors were hurled as a punishment for their crimes.

8. **Fittest goal.**—The most appropriate end or destination of Traitors, the place from where they were made to leap to destruction.

5. **Cured.**—Put an effectual end to the ambition that had made them traitors.

6. **Their spoils.**—It was customary for victorious generals to make votive offerings to Jupiter in his Temple on the Capitoline hill, from the spoils of war.

Yon field below.—The Forum, originally the market place at Rome, where men congregated, and public meetings were held, and public business transacted. Here Roman orators were wont to address the assembled people.

7. **Silenced factions.**—The Forum was the scene of political contentions. Here political parties met and disputed and denounced each other. Death has put an end to all.

9. **Burns with Cicero.**—Here, in the Forum, Cicero made some of his most stirring and eloquent speeches. The air still throbs, as it were, with his eloquence. It caught his fiery accents and still retains them. In the Forum, one feels that he is listening to the eloquent speeches of Cicero.

CXIII

1. **The field.....**—The Forum, where scenes of various kinds were enacted. Here the plebeians struggled for their freedom :

here political parties contended: here men acquired fame as great lawyers and orators: and here blood was very often shed.

2. **Were exhaled.**—Were breathed or poured out: were given vent to.

5 **But long before.....**—Long before Rome had reached the limits of expansion, long before she had ceased to make any further conquests, freedom had ceased to exist. Under the despotic sway of the Caesars, the people enjoyed no liberty. Anarchy prevailed in the place of freedom.

7. **Every lawless.....**—There was no settled order of succession. Over and over, some victorious general, with the aid of his soldiers, possessed himself of the throne, in defiance of the laws and constitution.

8. **Slavish mutes.....**—The Senate lost all independence. In fear and trembling, its members offered no opposition, but silently recognised every 'lawless soldier' who was able to make himself Emperor.

9. **The venal voice.**—The votes and support of men purchased with money. *Venal* means corrupt, mercenary.

Baser prostitutes—Men viler than the 'slavish mutes' mentioned in the line previous, for these not merely acquiesced in deeds of violence, but took an active part in supporting usurpers who paid them for their services.

CXIV

1. **Her latest tribune's name**—The name of Rienzi known as the last of the Roman tribunes, who was born about the year 1812 and was killed in 1854. He tried to put down the tyranny of the nobles and effect reforms in Rome, but his efforts were thwarted. In recognition of his services the people conferred upon him the title of Tribune, with all the attributes of sovereignty. In the first exercise of his authority, he displayed a very strict regard for justice and the public good, but he subsequently became ambitious and haughty and lost the confidence of the people.

3 **Redeemer.....**—Rienzi who by his noble efforts on behalf of freedom, did so much to rescue Rome from the accumulated shame and disgrace of centuries of bondage.

5—8. **While the tree.....**—While any traces of freedom still linger, let the credit of it go to Rienzi. Let him be honoured if freedom still survives, though sore oppressed.

9. **New-born Numa.**—Numa was the second king of Rome who is supposed to have reigned from 714 B. C. to 672 B. C. He was a philosophic legislator and was regarded as the founder of the chief religious institutions of Rome. Rienzi is called Rome's new-born Numa as he too was a legislator like Numa and attempted to give Rome new laws.

CXV

1. **Egeria**.—A nymph who received divine honour among the Romans. Numa is said to have received from her the laws which he gave to the Romans.

Sweet creation.—A purely imaginary being fashioned and framed by some loving heart whose ideal of sweetness and beauty, whose longings and yearnings could find no satisfaction in the reality of human life.

4. **Aurora**.—In classical mythology, the goddess of the dawn. She was represented as a charming figure, 'rosy-fingered,' clad in a yellow robe, rising at dawn from the ocean and driving her chariot through the heavens.

5. **Nympholepsy**.—A kind of madness or ecstasy that takes possession of one who has looked upon a nymph or come under her influence. It is suggested that Egeria may have sprung from nympholepsy, may have been the creation, that is, of some one suffering from nympholepsy, who cherished a hopeless love.

6. **A beauty**....—Not an imaginary being, but a beautiful woman of flesh and blood.

7. **A more..... votary**.—An admirer or worshipper gifted above ordinary mortals.

8. **Too much adoring**.—Who in his excessive adoration of her made her a goddess.

Whatsoe'er thy birth.—The poet has tried to account for the origin of the myth. Egeria may have been purely a creation of the heart and mind, or she may have been a real woman, glorified, idealized and deified by an ecstatic lover.

CXVI

2. **Elysian**.—Delicious, delightful. From Elysium, the happy region, in Grecian mythology, to which the souls of the virtuous departed after death.

3. **With years unwrinkled**.—With no traces of age,—as fresh and as smooth as it was in the days of Numa.

4. **Genius**.—See note, St. LXVIII, l. 1.

6. **Art's works**.—In ancient days, the natural beauty of the place was defaced by works of art, but these works of art have perished, and hence we see it now as originally created by Nature. According to the Latin poet Juvenal, a splendid marble shrine was built for the cave and fountain.

7. **Prison'd.....**—Confined in a marble cistern. The waters now are able to flow freely.

9. **Creep.**—The verb agrees with fern, flowers and ivy, though appropriate only to the last. These creep *round* or *around*, that is to say, all over the place.

CXVII

6. **Implore the pausing step.**—Implore the step *to pause*, that is to say, they entreat those who pass by to stop and admire them.

8. **Sweetness.**—The verb agreeing with it is 'seems coloured,' but it is not the sweetness that is coloured, but the violet's deep blue eyes in all their sweetness.

CXVIII

1. **Cover.**—Covert, a place of shelter.

3. **Far footsteps**—Footsteps heard at a distance, while he was still far off. Love's ears are keen to hear.

4. **Purple.**—A curious epithet to apply to midnight. What is meant is darkness softened and subdued by the mellow light of the stars,—pleasant to the senses and in harmony with the soft, tender feelings of lovers.

9. **The earliest oracle.**—The word *oracle*, (from O.S. *oris*, the mouth) has passed through several meanings. First, it is the answer of a god, or of some divinely-inspired person to an enquiry regarding some future event; then it is the deity itself who is supposed to give the answer; then the place where the answer is given and so on to other meanings. Here the cell or cave is called an oracle, as it was a place made sacred by the presence of a goddess who inspired Numa with knowledge.

CXIX

3. **Which dies.**—Love begins and ends with sighs. There are sighs at first for longed-for joys: there are sighs at last for joys that have departed.

7. **Expel the venom.**—The shafts of Love that penetrate the heart are like poisoned arrows, mingling pain with pleasure, sorrow with joy. If love could be freed from the pain it inflicts or the pain that accompanies it, then indeed it would be the source of pure and perfect happiness but, unfortunately, it is never unalloyed.

8. **The dull satiety.**—The feeling of weariness and disgust excited by over-indulgence in pleasure or by excessive gratification. This feeling is destructive of the joy that was first felt.

9. **The deadly weed.**—The idea is repeated. To *cloy* is to fill to satiety, and the whole expression means much the same as 'the dull satiety which all destroys.' There is a change of metaphor.

The painful part of love is at first the venom of a poisoned dart; it is now a noxious weed. It may be objected also that weeds in a garden don't *clay*: they choke and interfere with the growth of useful plants.

CXX

1. **Our young affections.**—Youthful love is compared to a spring of water in a desert. When young and inexperienced we waste our affections on what, perhaps, are unworthy objects. The joys that love promises are unreal. We wake from dreams of happiness only to find that we have been cruelly deceived.

3—6. These are the evil consequences of sensual passion so often mistaken by inexperienced youth for pure love.

7. **Passion flies**—Love having been compared previously to a spring of water, is now compared to some flying creature,—woman or goddess, one cannot tell,—beneath whose steps as she flies the world over in search of real lasting happiness, all kinds of noxious plants spring up. Real love, divine in its purity, bringing with it unalloyed happiness, is denied to men in this world, however much they may crave for it.

CXXI

2. **Seraph**—A Hebrew word meaning an angel, or one of a class or order of angels. Plural, *seraphim*.

3. **A faith.**—Our faith or belief in Love, referred to in the previous line.

Whose martyrs.—A martyr, literally a witness, is one who, by his death, bears witness to the truth of his religious belief, who suffers for his faith. Love's martyrs are those who having faith in love, suffer, in consequence, with broken hearts. Love brings to its votaries a great deal of unhappiness.

4. **But never yet**—The grammatical order 'the naked eye bath never yet seen.....thy form.'

6. **The mind.**—Just as our minds have imagined angels to be the inhabitants of heaven, beings that have no real existence, so also they imagine Love to be something real, something that is the source of real happiness. We are deluded or cheated by our fancies. What we desire to see exist, we fancy must exist.

9. **The unquenched soul.**—The heart with its unsatisfied longings, yearning for the things it fondly imagines to exist, and suffering cruel disappointment.

CXXII

1. **Of its own.**—The mind is disturbed and disordered by its own ideas or conceptions of beauty. The images of beauty that the mind creates throw it into a state of excitement from which derangement follows.

2. **And fevers.**—The construction appears to be doubtful. Byron may be using the word *fevers* as an intransitive verb,—the mind fevers into false creations, that is to say, the mind, labouring under intense excitement, is led into imagining things that have no real existence, just as in a severe attack of fever, one is subject to delirious fancies and hallucinations. *Fevers* is seldom or never used, however, as an intransitive verb, and the grammatical order intended may be 'the mind is diseased of its own beauty and of its own fevers into false creation.'

4. **Can Nature.....**There are no forms in Nature that fully correspond to or adequately realise the images of beauty that are present in the mind of the sculptor. What is imagined is far more beautiful than what really exists.

5. **The charms and virtues.**—Those ideals, those lofty conceptions we form in boyhood of love and beauty, as also of perfect truth and honour, and justice and all the other things that beautify life. In artless, unsophisticated youth, we imagine these virtues or these perfections to be realisable in actual life, and we set out in pursuit of them, but as we grow older and gain more knowledge and experience of the world, our minds get disabused, and we learn that the reality falls far short of what we imagined.

7. **The unreach'd.**—That happy state of things or that perfection which we fondly imagined as existing, but which we find to be quite unattainable in actual life.

8. **O'er-informs.**—Unduly vitalizes, animates to excess, stimulating them to attempt what is beyond their powers. The word is very rarely used.

The pencil and the pen.—The brush of the painter and the pen of the poet. The picture which the mind forms of an ideal state of things animates and stimulates the poet and the artist in their attempts to give shape to 'airy nothing.'

9. **And overpowers.**—The poet vainly tries to describe in his pages the paradisaical pictures of his over-wrought mind. Words are inadequate to do justice to the glowing conceptions of his mind surcharged and overborne with emotion.

OXXIII

1. **Who loves, raves**—Love is a kind of madness. Shakespeare in his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, classes the lover with the lunatic and poet as being 'of imagination all compact.' And again he tells us that "the lover all as frantic, see Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt."

2. **As charm.....**—The object of our love, the person whom we adore, is invested by us with imaginary charms and is glorified in our eyes, just as an idol wrapt in rich garments, is made to look

more beautiful than it really is. Strip the idol of its drapery, and it stands revealed to us in all its naked ugliness. Similarly, the one we love is idealised at first, but one by one the imaginary charms disappear, and we are disenchanted at last.

4. **Nor worth nor beauty.**—Perfect worth and perfect beauty exist only in the mind. They are purely imaginary things which are never realized outside the mind.

5. **It binds.**—It, that is Love, still binds us as with a spell. We continue to be spell-bound by Love.

6. **Still it draws.....**—In spite of better experience, in spite of repeated disappointments, we still allow ourselves to be deluded by Love.

7. **Reaping the whirlwind.**—Biblical language. *To sow the wind and reap the whirlwind* means to act in a foolish, reckless manner and suffer the consequences of such folly. In loving we deceive ourselves, and blindly pursue a course which is bound to make us unhappy. “

8. **The stubborn heart.**—The heart that wilfully and obstinately yields to love, practises a kind of alchemy, ever deluding itself with false hopes. The alchemists of old made it their object to find means for transmuting the baser metals into gold. Many of them spent fortunes in trying to effect what was impossible. They often deceived themselves with false hopes of success when success was far away from them, vainly imagining that wealth was at last within their grasp, when they had spent their all. So also with the lover. He indulges in dreams of happiness. He imagines that the longed-for happiness has come to him at last; he sees it in the fruition of his hopes. But he is cruelly deceived. No real happiness comes to him, but only pain and misery. All his affections and all his energies have been squandered to no purpose. What remains to him is an impoverished heart.

CXXIV

1. **We wither.....**—From the days of our youth, we waste our energies and consume our spirits in the vain pursuit of objects that can never be attained, till at last we become weary and sick at heart, with all our longings ungratified.

3. **In verge.**—We usually say “on the verge of.”

4. **Some phantom lures.**—We are enticed and led astray by some will-o'-the-wisp, some fancied good, some delusive hope.

8. **All are meteors.**—All look bright and attractive: all dazzle us for a while and then depart from us, like meteors that flash for a few moments and then vanish into darkness.

9. **Death.**—A meteor, brilliant as it may be, disappears sometimes in dark smoke. So also our pursuit after the things we so prize in this world,—love, fame, wealth, power,—is extinguished in the dark shadows of death.

CXXV

2. **Blind contact.**—The coming together of persons undesignedly or unintentionally: chance meetings. Two persons, a man and a woman, happen to meet or are brought together by what appears to be pure chance. They have no real knowledge of each other: there are no affinities between them, but yet this chance meeting leads, perhaps, to marriage, to a lifelong union. In such a case there can be no real, lasting love. Each is deceived.

3. **Necessity of loving.**—To love and to desire to be loved in return is a strong instinct implanted in our hearts, and we *must* love and cannot help loving, though we deceive ourselves and are doomed to disappointment.

4. **Antipathies.**—Natural contrariety of disposition or feeling. [There is no sympathy or affinity between two persons: their natures are different and incompatible, but when they imagine themselves to be in love with each other, the antipathies that exist are forgotten for the time, or cease to make themselves felt.

But to recur.—These antipathies, mutual repulsions or antagonisms, disappear for a while but only to return, perhaps with redoubled force: they lie dormant, but only to be reawakened into activity.

5. **Envenom'd.**—And when they do return, they return with greater virulence, embittered by wrongs done and suffered, which can never be undone.

6. **Circumstance.**—What stands around or happens by chance: the accidental circumstances of time and place, of birth and social position, etc., which so largely influence our lives.

Unspiritual god.—Circumstance is a god partly because we all worship chance and partly because circumstance or chance or fortune, or by whatever other name we may call it, exercises such a potent influence over our lives. It is an *unspiritual* god because it makes its influence felt not upon or through our moral nature. When we allow ourselves to be governed by circumstance, we are influenced purely by *material*, not *moral* considerations.

7. **Miscreator.**—This cruel god that interferes to deform and disfigure our lives, to mar and frustrate our plans and purposes, and make us unhappy.

8. **A crutch-like rod.**—Circumstance is represented as having a rod or staff resembling a crutch, to symbolize the fact that all the evils that it causes, help to maim our lives and make us, like lame men, go limping along our several paths. But the rod is also a magician's wand, because it calls up all the evils of our lives and at its touch, all our hopes are crushed and crumble into dust.

9. **The dust.**—We have all in the course of our lives trodden the same weary road strewn with disappointments. We have all tasted the bitterness of disappointment : we have all experienced the misery of hope deferred and hope unfulfilled.

CXXVI

“ The whole of Byron's philosophy is in this stanza : the idea that there is something false in human destiny and that man is out of place in nature because the aspirations of the soul are in contest with the laws of the universe. At this point Byron links himself to modern scientific pessimism.”—DARMEESTATER.

1. **A false nature.**—Our life is false in its very nature; it is essentially false. [How it is false is explained in the lines that follow.]

'T is.—It stands for what follows :—this hard decree, &c. The life that man lives in this world and all that he has to endure.

2. **The harmony.**—Man's life is not in agreement with, or is in conflict with, his environment, with the laws of nature. Born into this world with hopes and aspirations, desiring above all things to be happy, his life from the cradle to the grave is one long struggle against difficulties and hindrances, in which his aims are baffled and all his hopes shattered.

This hard decree.—The hard lot to which he is destined.

3. **This uneradicable.....**—This corruption of nature, this tendency or disposition to sin which he has inherited, which is in his blood, and which he cannot get rid of.

4. **Upas.**—A tree common in the forests of Java, regarding the supposed deadly properties of which many exaggerated and even fabulous stories were formerly current. The truth is that the Upas is a tree which yields a poisonous excretion and nothing more. The name has come to be applied to anything that exercises a wide-spread baneful influence. Here, man's sinful nature is compared to a Upas tree because it is the cause of all his sufferings, ' disease, death, bondage.'

5. **Whose root is earth.**—Man's sinful nature is due to the fact that he is of the earth, earthy. His corporeal or material nature accounts for the ' taint of sin,' which again is the cause of all his woes.

Whose leaves.—There is a want of clearness in the ideas here, due, perhaps, to the poet's pen being 'o'erinformed.' The figurative language is confused, one metaphor running into another suggested by it but not in keeping with it. The Upas tree grows to a great height, its leaves and branches touching the skies. This seems to mean that man's sinful nature grows and expands, and the evil that results attains to vast dimensions. It is not merely his body that is affected : his whole moral nature, his soul and spirit become tainted, till from the heavens above the vengeance of God descends in the shape of death, disease and bondage.

8. **The woes we see not.**—Those secret sorrows unknown to the world, which each one carries locked up in his heart.

9. **The immedicable soul.**—The suffering soul for which there is no medicine, which cannot be cured or healed.

CXXVII

1. **Yet.**—Although life is so full of misery, although our bodies may suffer from disease and death and bondage.

Let us ponder boldly.—Let us enjoy freedom of mind, freedom of thought.

5. **The faculty divine.**—The gift or power of thought, Wordsworth uses the expression to mean something else, the poet's power of imagination :—“The vision and the faculty divine.” *The Excursion*, Bk. I.

6. **Is chained.**—Free thought is repressed. Men are not allowed to think freely and are often punished for doing so.

Cabin'd.—Cramped and fettered, and prevented from developing. The phrase is borrowed from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, III. iv. 24 :—

“ But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.”

7. **Bred in darkness.**—Brought up in ignorance, Cruel and oppressive laws, vicious systems of education, erroneous teachings, keep men from perceiving the truth.

Lest the truth.—It is feared that truth or knowledge imparted too soon or too freely to men whose minds are not prepared to receive it, may do harm to them, just as excessive light may do injury to weak eyes. This is the excuse too often put forward by rulers who desire for their own purposes to keep their subjects in ignorance.

9. **Couch the blind.**—Restore eye-sight: enable men to see the truth. *To couch* is a medical term meaning to remove a cataract from the eye.

CXXVIII

1. **Arches on arches.**—A vast collection or series of arches, in endless succession. This is the appearance now presented by the Coliseum.

As it were.—As if it were that Rome would build up, &c.

2. **Her line.**—Vaguely put for her succession of imperial rulers, or of great men, or of triumphs.

3. **Woud build.**—Wished or wanted to build.

Dome.—Great building.

4. **Coliseum.**—The largest amphitheatre in the world, begun by Vespasian in A. D. 72, and known originally as the Flavian Amphitheatre. It was for nearly 400 years the scene of gladiatorial combats. The name is probably derived from the vast size of the building. It is now in ruins and is, perhaps, the most interesting relic of ancient Rome.

7. **Exhaustless mine.**—It furnishes food or material for inexhaustible thought and meditation. “ Moralists, antiquaries, painters, architects, devotees, all meet here,” says Mr. Forsyth, “ to meditate, to examine, to draw, to measure, and to pray.”

“ No relic of former greatness, no monument of human power, no memorial of ages that are fled, ever spoke so forcibly to the heart, or awakened feelings so powerful and unutterable.” —EATON.

8. **The azure gloom.**—This is something like ‘ the purple midnight’ of St. CXVIII.

CXXIX

1. **Which have words.**—Which speak to us in a language of their own, which are eloquent.

Ye.—Again incorrectly used.

3. **Shadows forth.**—Dimly reveals.

5. **A spirit's feeling.**—Old buildings, old objects, on which Time has set his hand or which Time has subdued, speak to us, appeal to us, as if they were endowed with feelings. They awaken in us feelings of awe and reverence, and pity and sympathy. [Both *bent* and *leant* in the succeeding line are inappropriate words and have been dragged in for purposes of rhyme].

Where he hath leant.—Where Time has left his mark without completely destroying.

Time is represented with a scythe, which is an instrument for mowing grass.

So Milton speaks of—

“ Whatever thing
The Scythe of Time mows down.”

Time with his scythe, seeks to destroy the works of man's hands, but in the case of some like the Coliseum, he only partially succeeds. He breaks his scythe without completely destroying.

6. **A power**.—A wonderful charm or influence which they exercise over our minds.

8. **For which**.—In comparison with which.

The palace.—Modern palaces with all their grandeur, must acknowledge their inferiority.

9. **Till ages**.—Till they have acquired that dignity and grandeur, which long ages alone, can impart.

CXXX

1. **Beautifier**.—Literally, the face of a person is often made more placid and more beautiful by death, the ruggedness and harshness of the features disappearing. But it is not only in this sense that Time is the beautifier of the dead. Time casts a halo or a glory over objects of the distant Past, even as distance lends enchantment to the view. We see this not only in the case of old and ruined buildings which acquire 'a power and magic' as Byron says, but also in the case of persons and institutions that existed long, long ago. There is a disposition to regard the Past as something better than the Present, as when we talk, as we so often do, of 'the good old days.' Memories are softened, evils are forgotten, and the good alone is remembered.

5. **Sole philosopher**.—Time alone teaches us wisdom and imparts to us the truth. Our judgments in regard to contemporary persons and contemporary events are liable to err, and it is only many years after they have passed away that the truth in regard to them becomes known.

6. **Sophists**.—False guides and teachers. The sophists in ancient Greece were a class of men who went about deceiving and bewildering those who sought after the truth, by their fallacious reasoning. We are led astray in various ways,—by our newspapers, for instance, our so-called organs of public opinion, by our governors, our politicians and statesmen, our teachers, secular and religious. They, like the sophists of old, too often mislead us.

From thy thrift.—Time hoards or stores up facts and information from which the truth can be ascertained in the years to come. The words must be taken in connection with *crave* in l. 9: 'I crave from thy thrift, &c.'

7. **Which never loses**.—The collection of data for future judgments may be a work of time, but nothing is wasted or squandered. The truth will become known eventually, however long it may be delayed.

9. **Byron appeals to Time** from the judgment of his countrymen. He believes himself to have been cruelly wronged and misjudged, and hopes that posterity will do him justice.

CXXXI

1. **Thou hast made**.—Time has built for himself a suitable temple in these vast ruins. The place has been made sacred by these ruins: the ground has become, as it were, consecrated.

2. **More divinely desolate**.—More divine in its desolation. That is to say, its very desolation has made it all the more sacred.

3. **Among . . .**.—In this Temple of Time, the ruins around him are the offering made to the avenging deity, and amidst these ruins, he now makes offering of his own ruins, the wrecks of his own body and mind, his own sorrows and sufferings, so that Time, the Avenger, accepting his offerings may take vengeance on those who have wronged him.

4. **Full of fate**.—Fateful, having the power, that is, of accomplishing his doom.

5. **Too elate**.—Too over-joyed and puffed up with success, too proud and jubilant.

7. **Good**.—Success, prosperity.

If I have reserved.—If I have clung to my pride, not for the purpose of exulting in success, but as a defence against the hatred of my enemies which I am determined shall not prevail against me.

9. **The iron in my soul**.—The bitterness of feeling I have experienced in my heart. The language is borrowed from the Bible. “The iron entered into his soul.” *Psalms, 105. v. 18.*

They.—Those who have hated and cruelly wronged him. If they are made to feel remorse, then he, Byron, will not have suffered in vain. He will have had some compensation for his wrongs.

CXXXII

2. **Left the unbalanced scale**.—Left the scale unbalanced, —left the account unsettled or unadjusted. There is no wrong which is not punished in the course of time, no act of injustice which is not righted.

Left.—A grammatical error. It should be *leftest*, or rather *hast left*.

Nemesis.—See note, St. LXXXVII, l. 7.

3. **The ancient**.—The ancient Romans.

4. **The Furies.**—In classical mythology the three Furies, or Eumenides, as they were called by the Greeks:—Tisiphone, Alecto, and Megara, were avenging deities. They are represented as fearful looking, winged maidens, with serpents twined in their hair, and with blood dripping from their eyes.

From the abyss.—The Eumenides dwelt in the depths of Tartarus or Hell and were dreaded by gods and men.

5. **Orestes.**—The son of Agamemnon and Clytaenestra. His father having been murdered by Aegisthus and Clytaenestra, Orestes, when he grew up, slew both of them in revenge. To punish him for murdering his own mother, the Furies pursued him from land to land.

6. **That unnatural.**—The slaying of Clytaenestra by Orestes was an act of retributive justice, but still it was an unnatural crime as she was his mother.

Just.—It would have been a justly deserved punishment, if she had been put to death by some one not so closely related to her as Orestes was.

8. **Thy former realm.**—Special honours appear to have been paid to Nemesis in Rome, which is, therefore, spoken of as her 'former realm.' The Roman Nemesis was *sacred* and *angust*: there was a temple to her in the Palatine under the name of Rhamnusia."

CXXXIII

2. **My ancestral faults.**—The faults of my ancestors visited on me. We often suffer for the sins of our fathers.

3. **Withal.**—With or from.

Conferred.—Inflicted. We talk of conferring favours, and honours, and rewards, but not usually of conferring wounds and things harmful or evil.

4. **It had flowed.**—It, the wound, would have flowed freely, or, rather, the wound would have been unbound and the blood from it would have flowed freely. What Byron apparently means is that if he had been justly punished for his faults, he would have acquiesced in or submitted to his punishment: he would not have nursed in his heart feelings of deep resentment and he would not have suffered so much. The metaphorical language used here will not stand examination.

5. **My blood.**—My blood cries out for vengeance. My wrongs shall not be forgotten or be unavenged.

8. **For the sake.**—Byron apparently refers to his daughter or to some one whom he loved dearly, but whose name he is unwilling to mention,—so he breaks off.

9. **Let that pass.**—Never mind : let me say no more about it.

I sleep.—The emphasis is upon *I* as in the preceding line, I remain silent and quiescent, and leave it to Nemesis to avenge my wrongs.

OXXXIV

1. **If my voice break forth.**—If now instead of remaining silent, I complain aloud of the treatment I have received.

2. **Let him speak.....**—I defy any man to say that he has seen in my face marks or traces of pain, the wasting effects of the mental sufferings I have endured.

[Byron boasts of bearing his sufferings with stoical fortitude, but there is nothing to justify the boast.]

4. **Convulsion.**—Violent tumult and agitation of the mind which gives to the face an expression of weakness.

6. **Not in the air.**—Not idly or in vain.

7. **Wreak.**—This word is commonly used now in conjunction with the word *vengeance*,—‘to wreak vengeance’ we say. It means to carry into execution in the way of vengeance.

8. **The deep prophetic fulness.**—The deeply felt prophecy in all its fulness. The time may be distant, but it will come, says the poet, when the prophecy contained in these verses will be brought to pass, that prophecy being that Nemesis will overtake his enemies, and his heavy curse alight on their heads.

OXXXV

1. **That curse.**—Byron professes a desire to forgive his enemies, but it is with a vengeance that he would heap coals of fire on their heads, and as Darmestater remarks very truly “His forgiveness is expressed with the accent of a curse.”

3. **To wrestle with my lot.**—To struggle hard with my fate.

4. **To be forgiven.**—That need to be forgiven, but one would have expected “not to be forgiven.” *Suffered*, however, may be taken to mean *allowed*, and the whole line may mean ‘Have I not generously allowed offences against me to go unpunished, offences which were unpardonable.

5. A very unrhymed line. It may be scanned as follows :—

Have I | not hád | my brain | séared | my heart | riv'n.

Sear'd.—Literally, burnt, scorched, cauterised as with hot iron : hence, figuratively, rendered dull, insensible, callous.

6. **Sapped.**—Secretly undermined : ruined in an underhand way.

Life's life.....—What is the very essence of life, what is dearer, in fact, than life itself, that is to say, his honour, sullied and destroyed by slander, by false and malicious stories.

7. Only not.—What prevented him from giving way to despair, what saved him from taking his own life in desperation, was the fact that he was differently constituted from other men, that he was made of sterner stuff or of finer quality.

9. Byron has a contempt for his fellow creatures or for such of them, at any rate, as he has had experience of. He regards them as despicable beings whose souls have become tainted and corrupt by the very vileness and impurity of the earthly bodies in which these souls dwell. The stuff of which he is made is very different.

CXXXVI

2. What human things.....—What cruel acts, what cruel wrongs, vile men are capable of doing. Such men are contumuously spoken of as '*human things*'.

3. Foaming calumny.—Slanders proclaimed aloud by men, foaming at the mouth with fury.

4. The small whisper.—The slanders of cowardly men spoken not openly, but with bated breath, in low whispers.

5. Subtler venom.—Slanderous statements which slowly circulate and work insidiously like poison, ruining the character of a person in a more artful manner.

The reptile crew.—Mean, despicable creatures who stoop to the lowest things to gratify their spite and their desire to do harm. Such men accomplish their purpose in a sly, artful manner, working, not openly, but insinuatingly.

6. Janus glance.—Double-faced look. In Roman mythology Janus was a very ancient Italian deity represented with two faces, one on the front and the other on the back of his head. To be 'Janus faced,' therefore, is to be double-faced or deceitful, hypocritical and treacherous.

Significant eye.—Eye full of meaning. A great deal may be conveyed by the expression of the eye, by a knowing look, though nothing is said in words.

7. To lie with silence.—To lie not in words, but with looks or glances.

8. Shrug or sigh.—Both are very expressive at times, and convey a deal of meaning. A deceitful glance, unaccompanied by words and accompanied only by a shrug or a sigh, has the appearance of truth, and is often to 'happy fools' confirmation strong of slanderous or scandalous stories they have heard.

9. **Happy fools.**—Foolish credulous people, easily deceived, who find pleasure in listening to and believing scandalous stories.

Speechless obloquy.—Slander or detraction destructive of one's character, not given utterance to in words, but silently expressed.

CXXXVII

4. **That within me**—It is not easy to make out what Byron means. Is it his spirit? It is described in line 6 as 'something unearthly,' and as something that will survive him.

Which shall tire.....Which shall exhaust the efforts of Time and Torture (the pain now suffered by him) to extinguish it. Which shall continue in spite of Time and Torture.

6. **Which they**.—Which they do not suspect. We have the word *deem* employed in a very unusual manner with *of*.

7. **A mute lyre**.—A lyre that has become mute or silent, but whose notes that were once heard still linger in the mind.

9. Byron thinks that hearts now hardened against him will in course of time be softened under the influence of the 'something unearthly' within him which will make itself felt after his death, and that pitiless hatred will give place to remorseful love, love, that is accompanied by or that springs from remorse for the wrongs done to him, though felt too late.

CXXXVIII

1. **The seal is set**.—I have affixed my seal to what I have said,—that is to say, I shall not go back from it. I confirm and ratify it.

Thou dread power.—What power is meant? It cannot be Time or Nemesis, because these are not nameless. Is it some spirit that is supposed to dwell amongst ruins; some ghost of the Past that haunts lonely and deserted places? Who can tell, it is all so vague and unintelligible.

4. The awe and fear referred to in this line are feelings inspired in the mind of the person present but are ascribed to the 'dread power.'

6. **The solemn scene**How the scene can derive a sense passes one's comprehension. Here again it is not the scene that derives the 'sense,' but the person who is affected by the scene. What apparently is 'meant' is that a sense of reality is vividly imparted to the solemn scene by the dread power, whatever the power may be, though this, too, is not very intelligible.

8. **We become a part**.—We lose ourselves in the Past or we become identified with it. We are deluded into believing that

we are living in the Past and actually taking part in the scenes that were once enacted here amidst these ruins.

9. **Grow unto.**—Assimilate with.

C XXXIX

1. **Here.**—In the Coliseum where the gladiatorial combats took place.

Eager nations.—People belonging to various nations eagerly witnessing the fights. Rome was mistress of the world and people from all parts of her wide dominions and of all nationalities, gathered in Rome.

2. **In murmur'd pity.**—Either in low subdued sounds of pity for the vanquished combatant, or in loud shouts and cheers in praise of the victor. As the word *buzz* denotes a low humming sound, it can hardly apply to 'loud-roared applause.'

5. **The bloody Circus.....**—The cruel laws which regulated the gladiatorial combats in the Coliseum and other amphitheatres. A Roman Circus was originally nothing more than a *race-course*, for horse and chariot races, games and public shows.

Genial.—The word is used here ironically, for brutal, cruel.

7. **Maws.**—Stomach.

8. **Listed spot.**—Ground enclosed for combats; or *lists* (in the plural) ... such a place is usually called, arena. *List* is from Lat. *līcīum*, thong, girdle.

CXL

The well-known lines of this and the following stanza were suggested to Byron by the famous statue of the Dying Gladiator preserved in the Museum of the Capitol at Rome. This wonderful work of ancient sculpture is now regarded as representing in reality a Gaul dying, and not a gladiator. Byron describes, however, not the statue itself, but the gladiator whom he supposes to be represented by it.

1. **Gladiator.**—See St. XCIV, l. 7.

Scan l. 1, as follows :—

I sée | beforé | me || the glád | iá | tor lié |

As occurs so often in Shakespeare, there is an extra foot in the middle of the line, just before the cæsural pause.

3. **Consents.**—Is resigned.

7. This is a very irregular line. It may be scanned as follows :—

Like the first | of a thún | der shów'r | and now |

There are only four accented syllables, the first two being anapaestic instead of iambic feet.

8. **The arena swims.**—He sinks into a swoon before he dies, and as his head grows dizzy : the arena seems to whirl round him.

Swim, to be dizzy, is etymologically a different word from *swim*, to move about in water.

CXLI

5. **His young barbarians**—A hackneyed quotation.

6. **Their Dacian mother.**—Dacia was a province of the Roman Empire lying along the north bank of the lower Danube, in that part of Europe that is now called Roumania. Byron imagines his gladiator to be a Dacian captive, the gladiators having been selected for the most part from captives taken in war.

7. **Butcher'd**....—Another line that has become a hackneyed quotation.

The gladiators were trained to combat with deadly weapons for the amusement of the Roman citizens at public funerals as well as on occasions of rejoicing.

8. **All this**....—All these thoughts and recollections passed swiftly through his mind in his dying moments as his blood poured out from the gash in his side.

9. **Arise, ye Goths**....—Byron regards the subsequent invasions of the Goths as vengeance on the Romans for the barbarous manner in which they treated their captives. Imagining himself as living in those ancient days, he raises his voice like one inspired, and calls upon the Goths to avenge the wrongs of their countrymen.

Glut your ire.—Fully satisfy your wrath.

OXLII

1. **Where Murder**....—Which reeked with the blood of those butchered in the arena.

2. **Choked the ways.**—Blocked up the passages leading to the galleries.

4. **Dashing or winding.**—The former is to be read in connection with 'roared' and the latter with 'murmured.' The mountain stream roars when it dashes headlong down a precipice ; it murmurs when it winds its way in the valleys at the foot of the mountains.

6. **The playthings.**—The Roman crowd that witnessed the gladiatorial fights were heartless. It was a matter of utter indifference to them whether those who fought, died or lived. The life or death of such men was of no consequence in their eyes and was a matter that depended entirely on their caprice.

If a gladiator who fell in the fight pleased them in any way, they signified their desire that his life should be spared by turning their thumbs downwards : if, for any reason, they were displeased, they held their thumbs upwards in token that he should receive his *coup-de-grace* or finishing stroke.

7. **Sounds much.**—Sounds loud.

CXLIII

2. **Walls, palaces.....**—“ Large portions of the amphitheatre were removed after the Middle Ages, and were used as material for building palaces and other structures, and the building suffered much spoliation and desecration until it was consecrated in 1750 by Pope Benedict XIV, to the memory of the Christian martyrs who had been sacrificed in it. The Popes have of late endeavoured to preserve the ruins from further destruction.”—Wheeler’s *Familiar Allusions*.

4. **And marvel.....**—The building is so huge that what has been taken from it is hardly missed. One wonders from what particular spot or spots in the building the plunder was taken.

6. **Developed.**—When it is developed, when it is unfolded to view, when it is viewed in detail.

Opens the decay.—The decay opens, that is, becomes visible,

9. **Which streams.....**—The light of day exposes in too grievous a manner the ravages caused by Time and man. Viewing the Coliseum by night one does not realise the extent to which the place has been plundered and destroyed. The destruction wrought is painfully apparent in the day.

Years, man.—Years and man. Byron frequently omits the conjunction when there are only two nouns to be connected. So in St. CXXX, l. 5, ‘ the test of truth, love’.—

CXLIV

8. **The loops of time.**—The gaps and openings made in the walls by Time. So in Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, 4. l. 71.

“ And stop all sight-holes, every *loop* from whence
The eye of reason may pry in upon us.”

5. **The garland-forest.**—The forest of shrubs growing on the tops of the walls and adorning them or hiding their barrenness as with a garland.

6. **The bald....**—Julius Cæsar was bald. “ Suetonius informs us that Julius Cæsar was particularly gratified by the decrees of the Senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious not to show that he was the conqueror of the world, but to hide that he was bald. A stranger at Rome would hardly have guessed at the motive, nor should we without help of the historian.”—BYRON.

8. **In this magic.....**—The ground is, as it were, enchanted ground, and as with the wave of a magician's wand, we can conjure or call up the ghosts of the departed heroes who fought and died here.

CXLV

1—3. The words quoted are supposed to have been the exclamations of certain Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, as recorded by the Venerable Bede. Byron borrowed his quotation from Gibbon,

6. **These three.**—Rome, the Coliseum, and the World.

8. **Rome and her Ruin.**—The Coliseum may be past redemption, but Rome, if not restored to the position she once held, has been to a great extent resuscitated since Byron lived and wrote.

9. Byron speaks contemptuously of the world. Morally there has been no progress, he thinks. It is the same world now that it formerly was,—a world of fraud and dishonesty.

CXLVI

In this and the succeeding stanzas, Byron describes the famous Pantheon of Rome, once a heathen temple, so called because it was dedicated to all the gods (Gr. *pan*, all, and *theus*, a god), but subsequently converted into a Christian Church under the name of *Santa Maria ad Martyres*. It is the best preserved monument of ancient Rome, and was built by Marcus Agrippa, B. C. 27. "The proportions of the beautiful portico have long been regarded as faultless. The interior is a rotunda surmounted by a dome, and lighted by a circular opening 28 ft. in diameter in the centre of the dome."

1. **Severe, austere.**—Both mean very much the same. Severely simple: free from embellishments.

2. **Shrine of all saints.**—The Pantheon when consecrated was dedicated to all the martyrs of the Christian Church.

Temple of all gods.—As a heathen temple it was dedicated to all the gods, and hence called the Pantheon.

3. **Spared and blest.**—Time has not only refrained from injuring it, but has hallowed it, has given to it greater sanctity.

4. **Nods.**—Totters as if about to fall.

6. **Through thorns to ashes.** Through pain and suffering to his death when his body will return to dust.

7. **Time's scythe.....**—See note St. CXXIX, l. 6.

Tyrant's rods.—The oppression, the destruction caused by tyrants.

8. **Shiver upon thee.**—Break to pieces. Neither Time nor Tyrants, both so destructive, have injured the Pantheon in any way, or the Pantheon has defied the destructive efforts of Time and Tyrants.

CXLVII

1. **Noblest arts.**—Architecture, sculpture and painting.

2. **Thy circle.**—The interior of the Pantheon is a rotunda, that is, a large round room or hall.

3. **A holiness...**—“The gray dome above, with its opening to the sky, as it Heaven were looking down into the interior of this place of worship * * * * all these *make an impression of solemnity* which St. Peter's itself fails to produce.”—HAWTHORNE.

4. **To art a model.**—Architects find a model in the Pantheon and try to imitate it in their works.

4-5. **To him.....ages.**—To the lovers of antiquity, to him who visits Rome on account of her antiquarian treasures, her noble relics of the past.

6. **Thy sole aperture.**—The single opening at the top of the dome. See note above.

7. **Beads.**—Prayers. From this original meaning we get the use of the word for the small perforated balls strung together in a rosary and used for counting prayers and then for ornamental purposes.

9. **Honour'd forms.**—The Pantheon has been used as the burial-place of painters, Raphael, Aumbale Caracci, and others being interred here beneath the pavement.

CXLVIII

In this and the three succeeding stanzas allusion is made to the story of a daughter who to save her imprisoned father from perishing, fed him with milk from her own breast.

1. **A dungeon.**—A cell connected with the Church of San Nicolo in Carcere.

3. **Shadow'd...**—Made dimly visible to my sight.

4. **Insulated.**—Detached and separated from other objects: standing by themselves.

Phantoms.....—Mere hallucinations: the imaginary creations of a disordered mind.

5. **It is not so.**—No! they are not phantoms, but realities.

8. **The blood is nectar.**—The blood is as sweet and as pure as nectar, the drink of the gods.

XLIX

1. **The deep.....life.**—The mother's breast from which in infancy we derive strength and sustenance.

4. **Blest into mother.**—Made happy by becoming a mother,

5. **Even the piping cry.....**Even in the shrill cry of her infant, so disagreeable to others, the mother finds a peculiar pleasure.

5-6. **That brooksuspense.**—The lips of an infant that cannot endure any pain, and that cannot wait for its wants to be satisfied, that is fretful and impatient.

7. **Cradled nook.**—This would literally mean the nook or corner that is cradled. What is meant, however, is the cradle in a nook or corner, or the cradle in which the infant is hidden away as in a nook or corner.

8. **Her little bud.....**—Her infant grow and develop.

9. **What may.....**—What may the infant grow into eventually?—Who can tell?

Cain was Eve's.—Cain, the murderer of his brother Abel, was Eve's son. Who could have foretold when he was an infant, looking quite innocent, that he would live to be a murderer.

CL.

3. **The debt of blood.....**—The duty of a daughter which devolved on her or which she inherited when she was born,—which she owed to her father having derived her blood from him.

7. **Great Nature's Nile.**—As the waters of the Nile when it is in flood inundate and fertilise the soil of Egypt enabling the crops to grow, so also, does the milk that flows from a mother's breast sustain the life of the infant, enabling it to grow and develop. [The crops in Egypt are entirely dependent on the annual inundations of the Nile.]

9. **Heaven's realm.....**—In Heaven or in the skies above, there is no stream so rich and beneficent as this. The comparison is with the Milky Way as accounted for in classic mythology.

CLI

1. **The starry fable.....**—The story of the origin of the Milky Way as related in Grecian mythology. According to this fable, Hercules, or Heracles, as he was called by the Greeks, as soon as he was born, was taken to the top of Mount Olympus, and put to the breast of Hera or Heré, the wife of Zeus, when she was asleep. When Hera awoke, she pushed the infant away, and the milk that flowed from her breast produced the Milky Way.

The Milky Way or Galaxy (Gr. *gala*, milk) in astronomy is that long luminous track which is seen at night stretching across the heavens from horizon to horizon. This luminous appearance is occasioned by multitudes of stars so distant and blended as to be distinguishable only by the most powerful telescopes.

5. **Reverse of her decree.**—Nature has decreed or ordained that milk from a woman's breast should feed and sustain the life of her child; but in this case, it was just the other way, the milk of the daughter having fed and sustained the father.

The abyss.—The deep, fathomless sky over our heads.

8. **Its source.**—The father from whom the daughter had derived her blood, her life, her strength.

9. **Our freed souls.....**—Just as our souls when set free from our bodies return and pass into the Universe, giving back life to that from which all life proceeds, to the source of all life.

CLII

1. **The mole.....**—The reference is to the mausoleum of the Emperor Hadrian, erected by him as his family tomb. It is thought to have been first turned into a fortress in A. D. 428, and came to be known as the Castle of St. Angelo, the fortress of Papal Rome. By a mole is usually meant a kind of breakwater, and it may seem strange that Byron should apply the term to a mausoleum, but he thinks of the building as it now is, and uses the word in its literal sense, a massive work built up of large stones, from the Lat. *mole*, a great heap.

2. **Imperial mimic.**—An Emperor who was an imitator.

Old Egypt's piles.—The Pyramids or other colossal structures of ancient Egypt.

3. **Colossal copyist.....**One who imitated or tried to reproduce on a large scale, the huge and shapeless structures of Egypt.

Deformity.—The abstract put for the concrete. Misshapen structures. Buildings wanting in elegance of shape, in beauty or symmetry of form.

4. **Travell'd phantasy.**—The fancy of one who had travelled a great deal. The Emperor Hadrian who assumed the government in 117 A. D. was a great traveller and spent most of his time in visiting the various provinces of the Empire. In 121 A. D. when he visited Britain, he built the wall known as Hadrian's Wall from the Solway Firth to the Tyne, a huge work of masonry.

From the far Nile's.—Learning from, or taking its suggestions from, the huge structures on the banks of the distant Nile, which served as models.

5. **Doomed the artist's.**...—Compelled men for the pleasure of the Emperor to labour hard in the construction of huge works designed as if for giants.

Artist's toils.—Toiling artists.

Artist's.—Probably used here in the sense of artisans, labourers. An artist, as the word is now generally used, is a person skilled in some one of the fine arts—painting, music, sculpture, architecture. The artists here referred to are the artificers who labour in carrying out the plans and designs of the architect.

7. **His shrunken ashes.**—The handful of dust or ashes to which his mortal body was reduced after death. *Shrunken*—Reduced in size or bulk.

7—9. **How smiles**—The philosopher who takes a calm rational view of things, who knows the follies of man, smiles in derision when he views this huge monument which is so striking an illustration of human vanity. “This proud fabric is an instance how completely vanity defeats its own ends. It was destined by Hadrian to hold his remains for ever. Had he chosen a more humble monument, his imperial dust might probably still have remained undisturbed. As it is, his ashes are long since scattered, his very name has passed away, and the place which was destined to be sacred to the greatest of the dead now serves for the punishment of the vilest of the living.”—C. A. EATON.

9. **Such a birth.**—The travelled phantasy in l. 4.

CLIII

1. **The dome.**—The Church of St. Peter's at Rome, the largest and most magnificent of Christian temples.

2. **Diana's marvel.**—The famous temple of Artemis, or Diana, in ancient Ephesus, Asia Minor. It was one of the largest and most gorgeous of all the temples erected by the Greeks and was regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Large as this temple was, however, it was a mere room or chamber in comparison with St. Peter's.

3. **His martyr's tomb.**—St. Peter's Church is built on the spot where according to tradition, Christ's disciple, the Apostle Peter, suffered martyrdom and was buried.

4. **The Ephesian's miracle.**—The same as ‘Diana's marvel.’

5. **Its columns.**—The temple was pillaged and burnt on several occasions, but scanty remains of it still exist. The place is now a wilderness.

7. **Sophia's bright roofs.**—A famous mosque in Constantinople and the principal place of Mohammadan worship in the world.

Bright roofs swell.—The gilded domes of the mosque, rise in the air, and gleam in the sun light. [The mosque has one principal dome rising to the height of 180 feet, but connected with it there are two half domes and six smaller ones which add to the general effect.]

9. The usurping Moslem.—The mosque was originally a Christian Church built by the Emperor Justinian, but it was converted into a Moslem temple by Mohammed II. in 1453.

CLIV

4. Since Zion's desolation.—Since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A. D. 70 when the temple was burnt and the city razed to the ground.

Mount Zion, the Holy Hill, is the chief and most interesting of the hills on which Jerusalem is built.

When that.—Archaic. In modern English *that* is never used after *when*.

5. His former city.—Jerusalem.

8. Aisled.—Displayed or embodied in the aisles which are the sides or wings of a church. The word is not used in this sense.

9. Ark.—A place in which sacred things are kept.

In Jewish history, the ark was a chest of fine wood overlaid with gold in which were kept secure the sacred vessels of the Jews and the stones on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed. It was placed in the sanctuary of the temple of Solomon. The Church of St. Peter, as containing the images and relics of Saints and many things regarded as sacred and necessary to Christian worship, is described as an ark of worship, that will endure for ever.

CLV

1. Overwhelms thee not.—Does not crush or overpower. Does not make you feel how small and insignificant you are.

8. The genius.—The peculiar or the prevailing character of the place. The spirit of harmony and just proportion that pervades the whole building and is its distinguishing feature.

4. Has grown colossal.—Your mind has widened to such an extent as to harmonize with the gigantic proportions of the building.

4—6. Your mind, dissatisfied now with smaller or inferior places, can find only in this huge temple, a sacred place suitable for fostering and preserving all your hopes of immortality, of a life eternal beyond the grave.

7. **So defined.**—Adjudged to be worthy.

9. **His Holy of Holies.**—The holiest of His Sanctuaries, the most sacred of all places. In the Bible, the Holy of Holies was the innermost apartment of the Jewish tabernacle or temple where the ark was kept and where no person, except the High Priest, set foot once a year.

Nor be blasted.—Without being withered up by the dazzling splendour of God's presence, or what is known as the beatific vision.

CLVI

1. **But increasing.**—But with mind expanding as you move. As you advance further and further and the building in all its vastness unfolds itself to your view, your mind keeps expanding so that you are able to realise to the full its enormous size and grandeur.

2. **Great Alp.**—High range of mountains. The effect is similar to that produced in the mind of one who ascends a mountain range. At first, his view is limited ; he does not take in the enormous height and extent of the mountains, but as he climbs higher and higher, his vision expands both bodily and mentally, and he realizes more and more the vastness of the scene, in all its length and breadth and height.

3. **Deceived.**—This goes with *Thou*. As you move, your eyes are cheated as it were. The very elegance of the structure prevents you from realizing its vast proportions. See St. CLVIII, l. 6.

Gigantic elegance. We do not generally associate elegance with what is gigantic, though the two notions are not necessarily contradictory. The dimensions of all parts of the building are on a very large scale, but they are all so nicely and justly proportioned that the impression made on the mind is one of elegance. It may be doubted, however, whether the word *elegance* correctly describes the impression produced. "I have been twice to St. Peter's," says Hawthorne, "and was impressed more than at any former visit by a sense of breadth and loftiness, and, as it were, a visionary splendour and magnificence."

4. **Vastness . . .**—It is only by degrees that one receives the impression of its vast size, but as the sense of its vastness increases, there grows also a sense of its proportion and symmetry. The vastness of the building is shown in the following figures:—It is 857 feet in length and 144 feet in height and covers a space of 240,000 square feet or $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

5. **All musical . . .**—The idea in the previous line is repeated. The vast dimensions are so regulated and adjusted that the general effect is one of music or harmony.

6. **Rich marbles**.....—All these things constitute grandeur, splendour, magnificence.

7. **Haughty dome**.—The huge dome alone which rises proudly at the top of St. Peter's may compare very favourably in size with some of the largest buildings in the world.

9. **The clouds must claim**.—Earth's chief structures' rest on solid ground, but this dome, as large as any of them, seems to rest on no support. It rises into the air and swells to the clouds, as if it belonged, not to the earth, but to the sky.

CLVII

1. **Piecemeal thou**.—You must examine the building in detail, part by part.

2. **To separate**.....—In view to contemplating, or so as to contemplate each part separately.

4. **That ask the eye**.—That attract the eye, that invite attention.

Condense thy soul.—Concentrate all your attention, all your mental faculties on objects that are close to you.

6. **Hath got by heart**.—Has thoroughly grasped and realized.

7. **Its eloquent proportions**.—Its just proportions which speak or appeal to you so forcibly.

Unroll.—Unfold to view.

8. **Its mighty gradations**.—Its vast dimensions which, as you proceed from one part to another, are gradually comprehended.

9. **Which at once**.....—The grandeur which you were unable to realise, which did not flash into your mind at first or all at once.

CLVIII

1. **Our outward sense**.....—Our eye, the external organ of sight, can only by degrees take in and fully perceive what is of vast dimensions.

2. **And as it**.....—And as it is the case or the fact that.

3. **What we have**.....—Our intensest, our strongest, deepest feelings.

4. **Outstrips**.—Are beyond our feeble powers of expression.

Even so.....Exactly in the same manner, the overpowering splendour of this structure baffles our weak eyes in their vain attempts to comprehend or realise it. Our visual power is as inadequate to grasp or realise vast magnitudes as words are to give expression to our deepest feelings.

6. **Greatest of the great.**—And being the greatest of all great edifices.

7. **Defies**....—It baileth, it makes it impossible for our feebleness, not of body only, but of mind and spirit, to comprehend its greatness.

9. **That.**—That which. The omission of the relative after *that*, though common enough in old English, must be regarded as a poetical license.

CLIX

Byron would have been well advised if he had cut out this stanza. It ~~proves~~ unnecessarily the description of St. Peter's and is not very ~~convincing~~. It looks like mere padding. As Darmestater truly remarks "it is a confused stanza as always when Byron attempts art criticism."

1. **Be enlightened.**—Enlightened as to what? The vastness of the building and the wonderful skill of the architect?

2. **Sating gaze**—Admiration carried to excess or surfeited. If the gaze of wonder is sated, what significance has the word *pleased*?

4. **The worship of the place.**—The objects of worship or objects that inspire worship, such as the images of saints, pictures of sacred scenes and sacred persons. It is a curious expression.

[The contemplation of St. Peter's awakens various feelings. First of all there is *wonder* at its vast dimensions, then there is *awe*, or reverential fear, inspired by the objects of worship, the things associated with religion, and lastly, there is *admiration* for the works of art, paintings and statues by the great masters.]

6. **Former time.**—Understand *neither* before *former*.

7. **The fountain of sublimity.**—A very inappropriate comparison.

Sublimity is something lofty, it cannot well be compared to a deep fountain. The two notions are not in accord. *Sublimity* may display its height, not its depth.

9. **Its golden sands.**—Excellent lessons. What lessons are meant,—moral, spiritual, or purely material and technical?

What great conceptions.—What grand ideas, what lofty designs, genius is capable of.

CLX

1. **The Vatican**—"The ancient palace of the Popes, and the most magnificent in the world, built upon one of the hills of Rome, on the right bank of the Tiber. It is rather a collection of separate buildings, constructed at various times than one regular structure. Its extent is enormous. It has 8 grand staircases, 208 smaller staircases, 20 courts, and, it is said, 11000 apartments of different sizes. Its riches in marbles, bronzes, and frescoes, in ancient statues and gems, and in paintings, are unequalled in the world. It also possesses a library, with a large and choice collection of manuscripts."—WHEELER'S *Familiar Allusions*.

2. **Laocoön's torture**.—The reference is to "a celebrated work of sculpture, now in the Belvedere of the Vatican at Rome, discovered in 1506. It represents the death of Laocoön, a mythical priest of Apollo or of Neptune, and his two sons, who are crushed in the folds of two monstrous serpents."—WHEELER'S *Familiar Allusions*. According to the legend, Laocoön tried in vain to dissuade his countrymen from drawing into the city the wooden horse, which the Greeks had left behind them when they pretended to sail away from Troy. As he was preparing to sacrifice a bull to Poseidon, two fearful serpents swam out of the sea, coiled round Laocoön and his two sons and destroyed them.

Dignifying pain.—Borne in such a way as to lend dignity to pain.

3—5. The poet describes the impression produced on the beholder. The expression in the face of Laocoön, as interpreted by the poet, is one of love for his sons, his own pain as a human creature, and the sublime patience of a divine being, all mingled together.

7. **The old man's clench**.—The hand of Laocoön in the statue tightly closed in his struggle against his agony.

The long-envenomed.....—The long body of the venomous serpent coiled round him tightly like a chain of many links.

8. **Living links**.—The joints of the serpent's body,—of a living creature,—which are like the links of a chain. These are firmly fastened to the body round which the serpent coils.

Enormous asp.—The asp being a small snake, the name can hardly be applied to a huge serpent, but Byron was in need of a word to rhyme with 'grasp' and 'gasp'.

9. **Enforces pang.....**—Inflicts pain upon pain at each constriction and as it tightens its grasp.

CLXI

1. **The Lord.....**—The reference is to the celebrated statue of Apollo, known as the Apollo Belvedere, and so called because it was placed in the Belvedere, a famous octagonal court in the Vatican. The word Belvedere means 'a beautiful view or prospect.'

[Apollo was one of the great divinities of the Greeks. Various powers were ascribed to him, some of which are referred to in this stanza.]

The unerring bow.—Apollo is the god who punishes : hence he is represented with a bow and arrows.

2. **The god of life.**—As he had the power of punishing men, so also he was able to deliver men, if duly propitiated. He was also the god of the healing art.

Poesy.—He was the god of song and music, and was regarded as the leader of the Muses.

Light.—He was the god of the sun.

3. **The sun.**—In human form, he was the incarnation of the Sun god.

9. **Developing.....**—Unfolding to view at once his divine nature.

[Byron's description of the statue may be compared with the following :—"Ardently excited, and filled with divine anger, with which is mingled a touch of triumphant scorn, the intellectual head is turned sideways, while the figure with elastic step is hastening forward. The eye seems to shoot forth lightning ; there is an expression of contempt in the corners of the mouth ; and the distended nostrils seem to breathe forth divine anger."—LUKE: *Trans.*

CLXII

1—4. **A dream of Love.....**—The exquisite figure of Apollo in the statue is such as may have been imagined in her dreams by a nymph yearning for the love of some immortal god.

5 **All.**—All things. The verb agreeing with it is *are* in the preceding line. Ordinarily *all* as used here should take a singular verb.

6 **In its.....mood.**—When the mind is inspired and transported beyond itself and beyond earthly things.

[The mind in its ordinary state or at ordinary times is not capable of idealising beauty, of forming, that is, an image of perfect beauty such as cannot be seen in real life ; but when it is enraptured, when it is carried away by ecstatic visions, it is inspired with conceptions, ideas from heaven, which stream into it from above like rays of celestial light.

7. **A heavenly guest**—An inspiration from above,—‘ a visitant from heaven.’

9. **They**.—The antecedent is doubtful. It may be *all* in line 5, or *conceptions* (*each conception* in line 7.) The grammar is open to objection.

These separate conceptions of the mind blend into one, take shape and are bodied forth as a god.

[Byron is trying to explain how the sculptor could have formed such a conception of ideal beauty as is embodied in the Apollo Belvedere. This conception as a whole is made up of separate conceptions or elements, and did not originate all at once in the mind. Each separate conception or element was received into his mind when it was in an exalted state and inspired. Then all these different conceptions or elements were combined together in one harmonious whole, the result being something god-like, transcending human beauty in its perfections.]

CLXIII

1. **If it be**.—If it be true.

Prometheus.—In Greek mythology, Prometheus, whose name signifies ‘ forethought,’ is represented as the great benefactor of men in spite of Zeus (Jupiter). He stole fire from heaven in a hollow tube and taught mortals all useful arts.

2. **The fire which we endure**.—Prometheus with the fire he stole from heaven, infused life with all its passions into man. The word *endure* implies that this passionate nature which we owe to Prometheus is the cause of all our woes.

3. **By him**.—By the sculptor of the Apollo Belvedere.

The energy.—Not merely the genius to conceive, but the power to express in bodily form.

4. **Poetic marble**.—A poem in marble. This marble shaped by the faculty of imagination into ideal beauty.

6. **Not of human thought**.—No ordinary human thought could have conceived or made this statue. Superhuman power or transcendent genius alone could have produced it. The mind of the sculptor must have been divinely inspired.

9. **Breathes the flame**.—It still manifests the divine energy which inspired the sculptor when he made it.

CLXIV

1. **The Pilgrim** . . .—Childe Harold, the hero of the poem, ‘ Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.’ *Pilgrim*, as used here, means only a traveller or wanderer.

2. **The being who**.—The personage who was the subject of my poem, and helped to sustain its interest in the earlier cantos.

3. **He cometh late.**—He makes his appearance late, after long delay.

[Up to this, no reference has been made to Childe Harold in Canto IV. The last mention made of him was in St. 55 of Canto III.]

4. **These breathings.**—These out-pourings or effusions.

5. **Visions ebbing.**—The scenes witnessed and described by him are fast receding from view. The poem has come to an end : the Pilgrim's wanderings belong to the past.

7. **Aught....**—If Childe Harold was ever anything but a purely imaginary character.

[Byron seems to imply here that Childe Harold was purely a fictitious character, a fancy picture, and was never intended to represent himself or any other person in real life. Whatever may have been his intention, however, it cannot be doubted that there is a great deal of Byron in the poem and more than sufficient to identify Childe Harold with him.]

8. **Forms which.....**—Persons in real life.

Let that pass.—Byron dismisses the question. He will not say whether Childe Harold represents a real person or not. Let people think what they like.

9. **His shadow.....**—Whatever Childe Harold may have been at first, he has grown less and less real, more and more of a phantom, until he has faded at last into something unsubstantial and impalpable, and like all things that suffer destruction in the course of time, he is now swallowed up in the Past, mingled in the welter of things that have ceased to be. Notice the bad rhyme, *was* with *pass* and *mass*.

[There is some affectation here. Byron has already told us that 'the beings of the mind are not of clay' and that they are 'essentially immortal' (St. V.) Even if Childe Harold was a pure phantasy, Byron could not really have believed that this creation of his mind would be consigned to the limbo of forgotten things.]

CLXV

Another stanza of confusion and obscurity, with an excess of metaphorical language.

1. **Which gathers.....**—This mass of destructions swallows up everything, real and unreal, substantial and unsubstantial. There is nothing in this world, whether material or immaterial, corporeal or incorporeal, that can escape this fate.

Cf. Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Act IV, Sc. I:

' Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, *all which it inherit*, shall dissolve
 And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind.'

2. **Shroud.**—A shroud being a winding *sheet*, a sheet or cloth in which a corpse is wound or wrapped, a *mass*, which is a collection of things forming one whole body, can hardly be compared to it.

3. **Pall.**—Another objectionable comparison. A *pall* is a heavy black cloth thrown over a coffin. Destruction's mass is first of all a shroud, next a pall and lastly a cloud.

4. **Through which.....**—How things can possibly be seen through a pall, or how they can grow phantoms through it, passes one's comprehension. The idea is very simple. All that Byron means is that everything in this world passes at last into oblivion, or if there are things which are remembered, they are remembered only dimly. The realities of the Present or what we fondly imagine to be such, become eventually the shadows or phantoms of the Past. Not only is this not true, but the metaphorical language in which it is conveyed is very inappropriate.

The cloud.—The veil or curtain of obscurity which, descending, hides the Past.

5. **All which ever glowed.**—All those things that once appeared so bright in our eyes, that were once admired,—they, too, sink or disappear.

6. **Till Glory's self.**—Till even Glory that once dazzled us, is dimmed or obscured. The glory that a man wins is like the sun at first. But just as after sunset the bright light of day gives place to dim twilight, so after his death, the splendour of his fame gradually fades, grows dimmer and dimmer.

7. **A melancholy halo .. .**—When the sun has set, only its reflected or refracted rays are seen in the sky, forming a kind of halo which lingers for a while, before it is swallowed up in the darkness of night. Such is fame or glory: it may linger for a time, but sooner or later, it sinks into obscurity.

9. **Sadder.....**—The rays are the rays of the halo, which has already been described as 'melancholy.' The halo is melancholy because its light is pale in comparison with the noon-day splendour of the sun, and partly also perhaps because it reminds us that the day has departed. The rays are sad for the very same reason, and also, because they awake in our mind sad thoughts.

They distract.....—They cause our eyes to turn away from the present; they draw our attention away from those things that concern us in this life.

CLXVI

1. **The abyss.**—The deep, unfathomable Future.

2. **When this mortal frame of ours shall return to dust and ashes.**

4. **Its wretched essence.**—Byron probably means by this our wretched life in the flesh, our life with its passions and heart-aches, which he regards as the essential part of the being called man; but it is all very obscurely expressed.

5. **And wipe the dust off.**—And to labour and accomplish some thing that will do credit to our names and keep our memories fresh in the minds of people when we are dead and gone.

Idle name.—The name that would otherwise be unprofitable.

6. **We never more.....**—That is, after we are dead.

7. **Happier thought.**—It makes one happy to think that he will never hear his name mentioned again after death: it makes him still more happy to think that, come what may, he will never be the same unhappy being that he was when alive on earth.

8. **Once.**—When we were alive in this world.

9. **Fardels.**—An obsolete word meaning burdens. It occurs in a well-known passage in Shakespeare—

“Who would fardels bear
To grunt and sweat under a weary life.”
Hamlet III. i. 76.

The heart.....The heart which in its agony sweated drops of blood.

CLXVII

The reference in this stanza is to the death of the Princess Charlotte which occurred in November 1817, when Byron was in Venice. She was the only child of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV, and was married in May 1816, to Prince Leopold of Sax-Coburg. The marriage was a happy one, but unfortunately she died the following year after giving birth to a still-born child. She was loved by the people of England who endowed her with many virtues and looked forward hopefully to the time when she would be Queen of England. Her untimely death plunged the nation into grief.

1. **Writing about Death.** Byron cannot help thinking of the recent death of the Princess which excited a melancholy interest everywhere and called forth the deepest sympathy.

The abyss.—Referred to in line 1 of the previous stanza. The world beyond the grave, hidden from our view, and of which we have no knowledge.

A voice.—Byron cannot mean the voice of mourning of a bleeding nation, for how could such a voice proceed from the abyss? The voice must be the voice of those who dwell in the spirit land, the world of shadows, who are in sympathy with a bleeding nation.

4. Immedicable.—Incurable.

5. The rending ground.—The abyss is the nether world. The ground opens wide and we are allowed to look into the abyss, where dwell the ghosts or phantoms, or shades of the dead, and there we see the chief among the phantoms, the Princess, who had recently died, looking queenly, but no longer wearing a crown.

9. A babe.—As the child was still-born, it is not easy to see how her breast could possibly have afforded it any relief.

[There is little to admire in this stanza. The grief expressed does not appear to be genuine. One cannot help feeling that it is all false and unreal.]

OLXVIII

1. Scion.—[Fr. *scier*, to cut, L. *secare*, to cut] originally and literally, therefore, a cutting, a piece of a slender branch or twig cut for grafting. Now meaning a descendant, an heir.

3. Could not—Could not the grave forbear from claiming you: could not Death spare you?

7. Death hush'd.—Death put an end to your grief for your still-born child.

9. The imperial isles.—Great Britain and Ireland which exercise imperial sway.

So full.....cloy.—A very weak ending. *Cloy* is a most unsuitable word to use here. We are first told that the joy filled the imperial isles, but, as if this was not sufficient, we are told again that the joy seemed to cloy fully, that is to say, to satiate, to be so excessive as to cease to be joy!

OLXIX

1. Can it be.—Is it possible that you, a Princess, happy and adored, could have died in child-birth.

3. Those who weep not.....—Persons like Byron who have no reverence, who do not care for sovereigns.

[Byron with all his aristocratic prejudices, had a contempt for sovereigns most of whom he regarded, and rightly so, as worthless.]

4. Freedom's hearts.—The hearts of all lovers of freedom.

5. **Her many griefs**.—The wrongs that Freedom suffered and which were the cause of deep sorrow to her.

[Owing to the excesses of the French Revolution and the cruel wars that followed, there was a reaction against liberty. Despotism was strengthened in many countries and oppressive laws were passed.

For one—For *one* grief,—the grief felt for you. Lovers of freedom forgot for a while the wrongs they suffer at the hands of kings and emperors, and mourn for you.

6. **Orisons**.—Prayers. *L. orare*, to pray; *os, oris*, the mouth.

7. **Iris**—The rainbow, the emblem of hope. See note St. LXXII, l. 8.

Lovers of Freedom had fondly hoped that happier days would come when she became Queen.

CLXX.

1. **Sackcloth**—A kind of coarse cloth anciently worn in mourning or in penitence. ‘In sackcloth and ashes’ is a scriptural expression meaning ‘in grief and repentance.’

Her marriage doomed her to death. The bridal dress of silk and satin that she wore on her wedding day was to prove a dress of sackcloth on account of the grief and sorrow that resulted from her marriage.

2. **Thy bidal's fruit**.—The bright hopes and expectations that your marriage gave rise to, have all ended in grief and in the bitterness of disappointment. The reference apparently is to what is known as ‘Dead Sea fruit or the apples of Sodom,’—fruit supposed in ancient legends to be found on the shores of the Dead Sea, delicious in appearance, but which turned into ashes when plucked or about to be eaten. Hence, the expression ‘Dead Sea fruit’ means anything fair to look at and promising well, but which proves utterly deceptive and causes bitter disappointment. Byron alludes to this purely fictitious fruit in Canto III, l. 81.

“Like the apples on the Dead Sea's shore
All ashes to the taste.”

4. **How we did**.—What confident hopes she inspired in us in regard to the Future.

5. **It**—Futurity.

5-6. **Must darken....**—And although we knew that we would not live to see that happy Future, that our bones would lie buried in the darkness of the grave.

9. **Like stars**.—Like stars that gladden the hearts of shepherds who watch their flocks by night.

'T was but a meteor.—It was a promise or hope that gleamed only for a while. It flashed on our eyes like a meteor, and like a meteor only to vanish soon into darkness: it was not like a star that shines with an abiding and steadfast light.

CLXXI

1. **She sleeps well.**—Borrowed from Shakespeare—

“ After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well,”

Macbeth, III. ii. 23.

2. **The fickle**.....—Cf. Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, III. iii. 122.

“ You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
As reek of the rotten fens.”

The opinions of the common people, their judgments and sentiments, so liable to change, and so utterly unreliable. Byron, as an aristocrat, speaks contumuously of the popular voice as fetid breath, offensive vapour.

3. **Hollow counsel.**—False, insincere advice which kings often receive from their counsellors.

The false oracle.—Much the same as the above. For *oracle*, see St. CLVIII, 1. 9.

4. **Hath rung**—Has tolled or sounded like a death-bell.

From the days when monarchy was first instituted, princes have received bad advice from their ministers, which has sealed their doom, or led to their downfall.

5-6. **O'erstung nations.**—Nations goaded to fury, driven to desperation by intolerable oppression.

6. **Have armed** .. .—As, for instance, in the French Revolution.

7. **Tumbles.**—Overthrows.

8. **Blind omnipotence.**—Omnipotence (or what they imagine to be such) which blinds them to their fate, which prevents them from seeing their impending destruction. Despotic sovereigns ignorantly imagine that they are all powerful.

9. **The opposing scale.**—The opposite scale. In one scale is their supposed omnipotence, in the other there is something heavier,—the decree of Fate, —which in spite of their omnipotence, causes their doom.

Soon or late.—Sooner or later. Byron's note in illustration of this is as follows:—“ Mary died on the scaffold; Elizabeth of a broken heart; Charles V a hermit; Louis IV a bankrupt in means and glory; Cromwell of anxiety, and 'the greatest is behind,' Napoleon lives a prisoner. To these sovereigns a long but superfluous list might be added of names equally illustrious and unhappy.”

CLXXII

1. **These**.....—These evils and dangers to which kings and princes are exposed, may have been her fate, had she lived to reign as Queen of England.

3. **Good without effort**.—Her goodness was natural and spontaneous. Like the quality of mercy, it was not strained.

Great.....—What is implied is that greatness creates enemies: a man cannot be great without making enemies

4. **But now**.—Only a little while ago.

Now there.—Now lying in the grave.

5. **Ties**.—There are ties of various kinds which link us to one another,—ties of blood and ties of friendship and other relationships. In her case, not only was she a daughter and a wife but, as a princess and presumptive heiress to the throne, she stood in a certain relation to those who, it was hoped, would one day be her subjects. All these ties were cruelly severed by her death.

6. **Another defective line to be scanned thus** :—

From thy Sire's | to his húm | blest súb | ject's bréast.

There are only four accents.

7. **The electric chain**.—A feeling of despair thrilled the nation through and through when she died. This feeling passed swiftly from the king to the meanest of his subjects like an electric current.

8. **Whose shock** .. —The shock that set in motion this current, that caused this thrill of despair, that is to say, her death, was as severe as an earthquake.

9. **So that..... best**.—This is a curious way of saying that she was loved equally well by all. No one could say that he loved her better than others did, so great was the love of all. The exigencies of rhyme must be held responsible for the weakness of the line, the word *best* being dragged in to rhyme with *breast* and *opprest*.

CLXXIII

1. **Nemi**.—The lake of Nemi, “an extinct crater 20 miles south of Rome, accounted for its beauty the gem of the Alban Mountains. There was here a famous temple of Diana, portions of which have recently been excavated.”

Navelled.—Placed or situated in the middle of the woods, as the navel is in the middle of the abdomen.

3. **Which spills**.....—Which makes the ocean overflow its bounds. *Spills* is hardly an appropriate word here.

5. **Reluctant spares.**—Reluctantly or unwillingly refrains from doing violence to the smooth surface of the water. The wind would be glad, as it were, to agitate and ruffle its surface, but it cannot, as the lake is so well sheltered by the trees.

7. **Calm as cherished hate.**—Calm as the face of one who nurses or cherishes hatred deep down in his heart, but does not betray it in any agitation of the features. The face wears then a fixed steely expression, hard, cold and relentless. The two comparisons, (1) to the face of such a person and (2) to a snake coiled and asleep, can hardly be considered appropriate as the picture they call up in the mind is repellent rather than attractive.

CLXXIV

1. **Albano.**—The Alban Lake, or Lago di Castello, which, like Lake Nemi, is formed in the basin of an extinct volcano.

Scarce divided.—The two lakes are not far apart, being situated in neighbouring valleys.

4. **The Latian coast.**—The coast of Latium, that part of central Italy, anciently so called, between Etruria and Campania, inhabited by the Latins and other tribes.

The Epic war.—The war described in Virgil's great Epic poem, the *Aeneid*.

5. **'Arms and the man'.**—The opening words of the *Aeneid*, the man being *Aeneid*, the hero of the poem :

"Arms and the man I sing, who first,
By fate on Ilian realm amerced,
To fair Italia onward bore,
And landed on Lavinium's shore."

CONINGTON'S Translation.

Whose re-ascending star.—*Aeneas* was one of the Trojan heroes at the siege of Troy. When Troy was captured by the Greeks, the fortunes of *Aeneas* declined for a time, but when, after many adventures, he landed on the coast of Latium, he retrieved his fortune,—his star rose again and remained in the ascendant. He conquered the country and laid the foundation of the Roman Empire.

7. **Tully reposèd.....**—Tusculum, where Cicero had a villa to which he often retired from Rome to find rest and quiet.

9. **The Sabine farm.**—The farm or small estate in the Sabine country which was presented to Horace, the great Latin poet, by Mæcenas, the distinguished patron of literature and the arts in the reign of Augustus. Here Horace found delight in the pleasures of a country life.

CLXXV

1. **My Pilgrim's**.....—My Pilgrim (Childe Harold) has reached the end of his journey, that is to say, the poem, the account of his wanderings, has come to an end.

5. **The midland ocean.**—The Mediterranean Sea.

Breaks.—Bursts into view.

7. **Our friend of youth.**—Byron, as a boy, was fond of bathing and swimming in the sea.

8. **Calpe's rock.**—The rock of Gibraltar. Byron is referring to his first travels six years before, when after passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, he continued his voyage up to the dark Euxine now known as the Black Sea.

CLXXVI

1. **The Symplegades.**—Islands at the entrance of the Black Sea, near the Bosphorus.

Long years.—Not as regards their number, but as judged by all he has suffered, the weariness he has felt.

2. **Not very many.**—Actually about eight.

3. **On both.**—It looks from this as if Byron did not wish to be identified with Childe Harold.

8. **Earth, sea.**—Note the omission of the conjunction.

9. **What is clear.**—A very feeble ending.

CLXXVII

2. **One fair Spirit.**—What spirit Byron means is not clear,—human or angelic?

For my minister.—To minister to my wants; to be a ministering angel to me.

4. **But only.**—The *only* is not required: it is pleonastic.

5. **In whose stir**.....—The pure, fresh breezes that blow around him on the Alban Mount, the rolling waves of the sea spread out before him, have an elevating influence on his mind. They lift his soul above the sordid cares and vexations of life.

9. **To converse.**—To commune or to hold intercourse with.

CLXXVIII

3. **There is society**....—Standing alone in the presence of Nature and holding communion with her, Byron does not feel that he is companionless, does not need the companionship of human beings. His own thoughts and his own feelings suffice him.

Cp. St. 90, Canto III:

“Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are least alone.”

5. **I love not.....**—His love for man is in no way diminished by the intensity of his love for Nature. The one does not affect the other. In Canto III, St. 69, l. 1, Byron says:

“To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind.”

6-7. **I steal from.**—I slip away from, quietly escape from.

7. **From all I may be**—From all that I may be at present, or may have been in the past.

8. **To mingle.....**—Forgetting what he is and what he was, to lose himself in the Universe, by getting absorbed into it, as it were.

Cp. Canto III, St. 72.

“I live not in myself, but I become
 Portion of that around me * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * when the soul can flee,
 And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
 Of ocean, or the stars, mingle and not in vain.”

St. 73.

Again

“And thus I am absorbed, and this is life.”

St. 75.

And again

“Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them ?”

CLXXIX

4. **The watery plain.**—Poetic for the ocean.

5. **The wrecks are all.....**—The destruction wrought is entirely yours: it is not caused by man.

6. **A shadow.....**—Not the slightest trace of the destruction that man causes is to be seen on the ocean.

8. **Bubbling groan.**—Groans that escape in gurgling sounds as when bubbles are formed.

9. **Unknelled.....**—Without the tolling of a bell, as is usual at funerals.

OLXXX

1. **His steps.....**—Man cannot tread the ocean as he treads the earth: he can leave no footprints on it.

4. **All.**—Completely, entirely.

5. **Spurning him....** Flinging him contemptuously to the skies, in scorn of his boasted strength.

In a storm, waves rise to a great height, and vessels at one moment are tossed up to the skies, as it were, and then sink into the trough of the sea.

6. **Send'st him.....**—Thou makest him fly in terror to the gods he worships for help in his hour of need, to save him, that is, from death.

Shivering—Trembling, not from cold, but from fear.

Playful.—As if the ocean was in a frolicsome mood and was only playing with him, or tossing him about in play. The epithet, however, is unsuitable. The ocean in a storm is not playful, but wrathful.

7. **Where haply lies.**—Where, perhaps, there is some church or temple dedicated to the god or gods in whom he puts his trust.

8. **Petty hope.**—Slight, slender, or, perhaps, trivial, childish.

9. **Lay**—An inexcusable error for *lie*,—one of the many, and, perhaps, one of the worst instances of Byron's lordly indifference to grammar.

CLXXXI

1. **Thunderstrike.**—Strike as if with thunder, bombard, cannoneade. The word is very rarely used, though the participial form of it, *thunderstruck*, is common enough.

4. **The oak leviathans**—The huge battleships, which in Byron's time were built of oak.

Cp. CAMPBELL : *Battle of the Baltic* :

“ Like leviathans afloat
Lay their bulwarks on the brine ”

The leviathan is a huge animal referred to in the Bible as living in the sea, but what animal is intended it is impossible to say.

5. **Their clay creator.**—Man made out of the dust of the earth.

The vain title take.—England is known as Mistress of the Seas : The Doge of Venice was called the 'Lord of the Adriatic.'

7. **As the snowy flake.**—As a flake of snow melts when it falls into the sea.

8. **Thy yeast of waves.**—Thy foaming, frothing waves. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth* we have the expressions 'Yesty Waves.'

Yeast.—Is properly the froth that gathers on fermenting liquors.

9. **The Armada's pride.**—The Invincible Armada which set out from Spain in the pride of its strength to conquer England, was destroyed by storms.

Spoils of Trafalgar.—The French and Spanish ships captured by the British at the battle of Trafalgar which went down in a storm after the battle.

Trafalgar.—Correctly pronounced by Byron with the accent on the third syllable though usually pronounced with the accent on the second.

CLXXXII

1. **Thy shores**—All the Empires mentioned bordered on some part or other of the Mediterranean Sea: they have all undergone great changes and ceased to be: only the sea remains unchanged.

3. **Washed them power.**—Brought power to them by means of commerce.

4. **And.....tyrant.**—And washed or bore to their shores many a tyrant also.

Their shores obey.—The countries bordering on the Mediterranean in Byron's time were ruled by foreign powers (as in the case of Italy), by Slaves (as in the case of Greece), by savage tribes (as in the case of Northern Africa).

6. **Has dried.....deserts.**—As in the North of Africa.

7. **Save to.**—Except in respect to.

8. **Time writes.....**—No traces of age, such as mark the faces of human beings are to be found on the surface of the Ocean, which is the same now as it was when the world was first created.

Cp.

“And thou vast ocean, on whose awful face

Time's iron feet can print no ruin-trace.”—

ROBERT MONTGOMERY: *The Omnipresence of the Deity.*

CLXXXIII

2. **Glasses itself in tempests.**—The mighty power of God is reflected and made manifest in raging tempests.

4. **Icing the pole.**—Frozen into ice at the poles.

6. **The image.**—As being boundless, endless and sublime, the Ocean may be regarded as an emblem or symbol of Eternity which has no beginning or end.

8. **Each zone.**—The power of the ocean is felt in every zone; it extends over the whole world.

CLXXXIV

2. **Youthful sports.**—It has already been said that Byron as a boy took great delight in swimming. His powers as a swimmer were displayed when he swam across the Hellespont in emulation of the feat of Leander, who for the love of Hero, nightly swam across the Straits, till he was drowned.

5. **Freshening.**—Growing stronger and rougher.

7. **A child of thee.**—During the greater part of his childhood, Byron lived with his mother at Aberdeen, near the sea, and was quite familiar with it.

9. **And laid..... mane.**—As a rider does when about to mount his horse, or when on horse back. When swimming, he rode on the waves as if on the back of a horse.

By *mane* perhaps is meant the foaming tops of the waves.

Cp. the following:—

“He laid his hand upon the Ocean’s mane,
And played familiar with his hoary locks.”—

ROBERT POLLOCK: *The Course of Time*, Bk. IV. l. 389

As I do here.—A feeble ending to a line that has not much meaning in it.

CLXXXV

2. **Has died into an echo**—Has faded away, has grown fainter and fainter, till hardly anything of it is left.

3. **The spell.....**—His mind has been under the influence of a spell or charm all the time that his imagination has been at work, as in a dream, in the production of this long poem. The work has been unduly prolonged, and it is right and proper, he thinks, that he should now dispel the charm, and bring his poem to an end.

4. **The torch.....**—That afflatus, that power of inspiration which has kindled his imagination and enlightened his mind.

4-5. **Hath lit my midnight lamp.**—Has helped him in his poetic labours at midnight.

5. **What is writ... .**—The words of Pilate to the chief priests of the Jews, “What I have written, I have written,” meaning that he would not alter what he had written.—ST. JOHN xix, 22.

7. **My visions.**—The images, the creations of his mind

8. **Less palpably**—More dimly, in a more shadowy form, They are not clear and vivid as they once were, before his mental powers were impaired.

The glow.—The ardour or enthusiasm, intensity of passion.

9. Is fluttering.....—Is flickering, and growing fainter and fainter like the dying flame of a candle. He feels that his powers are waning.

CLXXXVI

1. That must be.....—That must be spoken and has often been spoken. Life is full of farewells, of sad partings.

2. Which. . linger—When bidding farewell, we are slow to depart : we unwillingly tear ourselves away.

4. If in your.....—The poet says that if any thought of his that he has given expression to, has fixed itself in the minds of his readers as worthy of being remembered, if anything that he has written swells or rises up in their memories, if he has given them, that is, any pleasure or instruction, then he will not have written in vain, and will feel that he is amply rewarded for his pains.

7. Sandal-shoon and scallop-shell.—Things worn by pilgrims as outward and visible signs of their pilgrimage.

The Pilgrim, Childe Harold, has not worn these things in vain, that is to say, the poet has not in vain undertaken to give an account of his travels.

Shoon.—An old plural form of *shoe*.

8. With him alone.—If the poem has caused any pain, may the pain be felt by him alone, that is to say, the poet.

9. If such there were.....—To be taken with what follows. If there be any moral, any useful lesson to be learnt from the poem, let it be for the benefit of his readers.

Were.—The mood of the verb is wrong!

APPENDIX.

Familiar Quotations from Canto IV.

I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs.
St. 1.

The Ariosto of the North.
St. 40.

Italia ! oh Italia ! thou who hast.
The fatal gift of beauty.
St. 42.

The Starry Galileo with his woes.
St. 54.

The poetry of speech.
St. 58.

The hell of waters where they howl and hiss.
St. 69.

The Niobe of nations ! there she stands.
St. 79.

Yet Freedom ! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind.
St. 98.

Heaven gives its favourites—early death.
St. 102.

Man !
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear.
St. 109.

The nympholepsy of some fond despair.
St. 115.

Alas ! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert.
St. 120.

I see before me the Gladiator lie.
St. 140.

There were his young barbarians all at play.
St. 141.

Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday.

St. 141.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar.

St. 178.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore.

St. 179.

Time, writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow.

St. 182.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell.

St. 186.

INDEX TO NOTES

A

Abyss, *lxix.* 4.
Acroceraunian, *lxxiv.* 1.
Adamantine, *xcvii.* 6.
Aisled, *cliv.* 8.
Albano, *cxxxiv.* 1
Albion, *xvii.* 7.
Alcides, *xc.* 8.
Alexander, *cxi.* 7 & 8.
Alfieri, *liv.* 7.
Allow, *xxxviii.* 7.
Alphonso, *xxx.* 3.
Alpine, *xx.* 4.
Ambrosial, *xl ix.* 3.
Anchises, *li.* 2.
Angelo, *liv.* 7.
Anon, *xxiii.* 1.
Antipathies, *cxxv.* 4.
Antique brood, *xxxv.* 4.
Ape, *liii.* 2.
Apollo Belvedere, *clxi.* 1.
Arena, *xciv.* 8.
Ariosto of the North, *xl.* 8.
Ark, *xcii.* 8, *cliv.* 9.
Arno's dome, *lxii.* 2.
Armada, *clxxxi.* 9.
Arqua, *xxx.* 1.
Athens' armies, *xvi.* 1.
Athos, *lxxiv.* 6.
Atlas, *lxxiv.* 6.
Attic, *xvi.* 8.
Aurora, *c xv.* 4.
Azure, *xxvii.* 9.

B

Bard of Chivalry, *xl.* 8.
Bard of Hell, *xl.* 8.
Bard of Prose, *lvi.* 8.
Bastard Cæsar, *xc.* 2,
Bespeaks, *xv.* 4,
Boileau, *xxxviii.* 7.

Brenta, *xxviii.* 7.
Bridge of Sighs, *i.* 1.
Bucentaur, *xi.* 3.
Buried Learning, *xl viii.* 9.
By-word, *xiv.* 2.
Byzantium, *xii.* 9.

C

Cabined, *cxxvii.* 6.
Cæsar's pageant, *lix.* 8.
Cain, *cxlii.* 9.
Candia, *xiv.* 7.
Canova, *lv.* 9.
Capitol, *lxxx.* 5.
Car, *lxxx.* 5.
Choral memory, *xvii.* 8.
Cicero, *xliv.* 8.
Circumfused, *lii.* 1.
Circumstance, *cxxv.* 6.
Circus, *cxxxix.* 5.
Cleopatra, *xc.* 9.
Clitumnus, *lxvi.* 1.
Cloudy groan, *civ.* 5.
Coliseum, *cxxvii.* 4.
Colossal copyist, *clii.* 8.
Columbia, *xcvi.* 3.
Connoisseurship, *liii.* 3.
Coquettish, *xci.* 8.
Couch, *cxxvii.* 9.
Cradled nook, *cxlii.* 7.
Creaking, *xxxviii.* 8.
Crisp, *liii.* 6
Cruscan quire, *xxxviii.* 6.
Crutch-like, *cxxv.* 8.
Cybele, *ii.* 1.
Cypress, *lxxviii.* 6.

D

Dacian, *cxli.* 6.
Dandolo, *xii.* 8.
Dante, *lvii.* 1.
Dardan Shepherd, *l.* 9.

Diana's marvel, cliii. 2.
 Dian's crest, xxvii. 8.
 Despond, iv. 3.
 Developing, xxxiii. 1, clxi. 9.
 Doge, iv. 4.
 Dolphin, xxix. 7.
 Doria, xiii. 8.
 Dying Gladiator, cxl. 1.

E

Eddying storms, xx. 5.
 Egeria, cxv. 1.
 Elysian, cxvi. 2.
 Electric chain, xxiii. 9.
 Este, xxxv. 5.
 Etrurian Athens, xlvi. 2.
 Eureka, lxxxi. 8.
 Ephesian's miracle, cliii. 4.
 Epic war, clxiv. 4.
 Exorcism, xxiv. 7.

F

Ferrara, xxxv. 1.
 Foaming calumny, cxxxvi. 3.
 Fondly, xli. 7.
 Fortunes wheel, lxxxiii. 1.
 Frescos, cvii. 4.
 Friuli, xxvii. 4.
 Funeral dower, xlvi. 3.
 Furies, cxxxii. 4.

G

Galileo, liv. 8.
 Genius, lxviii. 1, clv. 8.
 Gewgaws, cix. 7.
 Gladiator, xciv. 7.
 Gondolier, iii. 2.
 Goth, lxxx. 1.

H

Hectic, cii. 8.
 Hesperus, cii. 8.
 Holy of Holies, clv. 9.
 Hundred Tales, The, lvi. 4.
 Hysena bigots, lviii. 7.

I
 Ida, lxxiv. 5.
 Immaculate, xxvi. 9.
 Imperial Mount, cvii. 9.
 Imperial urn, cx. 9.
 Incrust, ix. 3.
 Instil, xxviii. 7.
 Inveteracy, lxvi. 4.
 Iris, xxvii. 6.
 Iris, lxxii. 3.
 Island of the blest, xxvii. 9.

J

Janus, cxxxvi. 6.
 Jungfrau, lxxiii. 6.

K

Keys of heaven, xlvi. 6.
 Keystone. iv. 8.

L

Laocoön, clx. 2.
 Latian, clxxiv. 4.
 Latian echoes, lxxv. 6.
 Laura's lover, xxx. 3.
 Lauwine, xii. 7.
 Lava kisses, li. 8.
 Legion, lxii. 9.
 Lepanto, xiv. 8.
 Leviathans, cxxxii. 4.
 Life's life, cxxxv. 6.
 Lightning, xli. 1, 8.
 Line, ix. 5.
 Livy, lxxxii. 6.
 Listed, cxxxix. 8.
 Loops, cxliv. 8.
 Lord of War, li. 4.
 Lunar light, lxxx. 8.
 Lyric Roman, lxiv. 8.

M

Machiavelli, liv. 9.
 Masque, iii. 9.
 Master-mould, xxv. 7.
 Mausoleum, ix. 7.
 Maws, cxxxix. 7.

Merchant-dukes, lx. 4.
 Milky way, cli. 1.
 Mirage, lxxxi. 9.
 Miscreator, cxxxv. 7.
 Mole (Hardrian's), clii. 1.
 Monotony in wire, xxxviii. 9.
 Monumental fane, xxxi. 9.
 Moody texture, xxxiv. 4.

N

Nameless column, cx. 2.
 Navelled, cxlviii. 1.
 Nectar, cxlviii. 8.
 Nemesis, lxxxvii. 7.
 Nemi, clxxiii. 1.
 Niobe, lxxix. 1.
 Numa, cxiv. 2.
 Nympholepsy, cxv. 5.

O

Obloquy, cxxxvi. 9.
 Ocean Queen, xvii. 7.
 Olympus, lxxiv. 6.
 Oracle, cxviii. 9.
 Orestes, cxxxii. 5.
 Orisons, clix. 6.
 Otway, xviii. 5.
 Overweening, vii. 8.

P

Palatine, cvi. 6.
 Pallas, xcvi. 4.
 Pall, clxv. 8.
 Pantheon, The, cxlvii. 1.
 Parnassus, lxxiv. 2.
 Phantasies, vii. 8.
 Phlegethon, lxix. 8.
 Pierre, iv. 7.
 Pilgrim, The, cxiv. 1.
 Piræus, xliv. 6.
 Poisoned arrows, xxxix. 3.
 Pompey, lxxxvii. 8.
 Prometheus, cxlii. 1.
 Puppets, lxxxvii. 9.
 Purple, ii. 8.
 Pyramid, xxxi. 9.

Quire, xxxviii. 6.

R

Radcliffe, xviii. 5.
 Rainbow, xcii. 9.
 Ravenna, lix. 5.
 Redundant horn, xlviii. 6.
 Rehearse, lxxvii. 5.
 Reptile crew, cxxxvi. 5.
 Requiem, lvii. 3.
 Reed, xxii. 7.
 Rhuthain hill, xxviii. 4.
 Rialto, The. iv. 6.
 Rienzi, cxiv. 1.
 Rome's best Son, lix. 4.

S

Sabine, clxxiv. 9.
 Sackcloth, clxx. 1.
 Sandal shoon, clxxxvi. 7.
 Sauntering hours, xxxiii. 3.
 Sophists, cxxx. 6.
 Sarcophagus, xxx. 2.
 Santa Croce, liv. 1.
 Sating gaze, clix. 2.
 Saturnalia, xcvi. 2.
 Scallop-shell, clxxxvi. 7.
 Schiller, xviii. 5.
 Scimitar, xvi. 7.
 Scion, clxviii. 1.
 Scipio, lvii. 2.
 Scipio's tomb, lxxix. 5.
 Soracte, lxxiv. 8.
 Seven-hill'd, lxxx. 2.
 Shade, xxxix. 1.
 Shroud, clxv. 2.
 Shylock, iv. 6.
 Siren, lviii. 4.
 Sophia, clii. 7.
 Southern Scott, xl. 6.
 Sparta, x. 5.
 Spectres, xxiv. 7.
 Spouseless Adriatic, xi. 1.
 Starry fable, cli. 1.
 Suabian, xii. 1.
 Sublimity, clix. 7.
 Supine, lxxxiv. 6.

Sylla, lxxxiii. 2
Symplegades, clxxvi. 1.

T

Tannen, xx. 1.
Tarpesian, cxii. 8.
Tasso, iii. 1.
Temple, x. 1.
Temper, xxi. 9.
Thrasimene, lxii. 2.
Thunder-hills, lxxiii. 9.
Thunder-stricken, lxxxviii. 1.
Tiara, ii. 2.
Titanic, xlvi. 8.
Titus, cx. 6.
Torquato, xxxvi. 3.
Tratagar, clxxxi. 9.
Trajan, cx. 6.
Travelled phantasy, clii. 4.
Tully, xliv. 4.
Tuneful relics, lix. 8.
Tyre, xiv. 1.

Upas, cxxvi. 4.
Urn, li. 9.; lxxix. 3.

V

Vatican, cix. 1.
Velino, lxix. 2.
Venal, cxiii. 9.
Virgil, lxxxii. 5.
Vouch, xiv. 7.

W

Washington, xcvi. 8.
Water-column, xviii. 3.
Watery wall, xvii. 9.
Whetstone, xxxviii. 9.
Winged Lion, i. 8.
Wreak, cxxxix. 7.

X

Yeast, clxxxi. 8.
Yore, xxxv. 6.

Z

Zephyr, lxviii. 2.
Zion, cliv. 4.

U
Umbrage, xxxii. 5.